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THE CORAL LADY

OR

THE BRONZED BEAUTY OF PARIS.

A STRANGE LIFE NARRATIVE OF LOVE, BETRAYAL,
CRIME, AND FRIGHTFUL REVENGE.

BEING THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE LOVELY AND MYSTERIOUS BRONZED LADY
OF PARIS, WHO, COMING FROM NO ONE KNEW WHERE, TOOK UP HER
ABODE IN THE CITY OF PARIS, JUST PREVIOUS TO THE OPENING OF
THE GREAT EXPOSITION, AND WHO DISAPPEARED JUST AS
MYSTERIOUSLY IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT CLOSED.

Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte
BY MRS. SOUTHWORTH.

WHO HAD SEVERAL INTERVIEWS WITH THIS SINGULAR WOMAN WHILE IN PARIS.

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CRIME, AND FRIGHTFUL REVENGE.

Being the True History of the Jolly and Mysterious Bronzed Lady
of Paris, Who, Coming from the East, Took Up Her
Abode in the City of Paris, Just Previous to the Opening of
The Great Exposition, and Who Disappeared Just As
Mysteriously Immediately After It Closed.

BY MRS. SOUTHWORTH

WHO HAD SEVERAL INTERVIEWS WITH THIS BIZARRE WOMAN WHILE IN PARIS.

PHILADELPHIA
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THE

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(1867)

CORAL LADY.



BY

MRS. SOUTHWORTH.

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THE CORAL LADY.

HOW MRS. SOUTHWORTH BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH THE CORAL LADY.

It was during her visit to Paris in 1867 that Mrs. Southworth the authoress of the following narrative became acquainted with the Celebrated CORAL LADY; or as the Parisians called her "THE BRONZED BEAUTY." It happened in a most singular and romantic manner as the reader will perceive upon reading the account, Mrs. Southworth gives in her own felicitous style.

On the afternoon previous to the opening of the great Exposition at Paris, Mrs. Southworth and two personal friends who had accompanied her to France from this country, were passing a pleasant hour in the Champs Elysées. They were sitting on a bench facing the Avenue de Neuilly, and watching the throngs of splendid equipages that streamed past incessantly with their gay and merry occupants.

Suddenly a commotion took place, and scarcely had our friends begun to conjecture its cause, when a carriage drove past, which as well as its inmate, excited the astonishment and admiration of every spectator.

The horses were of a splendid glossy black color, and so fiery as to require all the strength and skill of their driver to control them. The carriage, a light open affair, was painted and trimmed throughout of an ebony black, but was brilliantly relieved by lines and prickings of red; the design of which was strings of red Coral. Not only the running gear, but even the very harness was ornamented in this strange yet handsome manner. The liveries of the Coachman and footman, both of whom were

negroes, were in keeping with the rest of the turnout, the braiding and also the buttons being of fine scarlet silk in imitation of red Coral.

The great centre of attraction though, was the occupant of the carriage -- a young lady of about twenty five years of age. Startlingly and ravishingly lovely, the stranger was at once the cynosure of all eyes. Yet she seemed utterly indifferent, and took no notice whatever of anything or any person. Her features were Grecian in their regularity, while her complexion was of a peculiar bronzed hue, which being lit up by her large, lustrous black eyes, added a fascination to her beauty that was irresistible.

The dress of this singular young Lady was in unison with the style of her whole turnout, though no one looked at it who did not remark how modest and pretty it was. But we will let Mrs. Southworth describe it. She writes:

Her head dress consisted of a simple piece of jet-black velvet, ornamented with rows of bright red coral. Her dress was of the same material; ornamented in the same manner. One fact struck me with great force, and that was, that while all the French beauties made the most prodigal and in many cases the most vulgar exposure of their shoulders and arms, this lovely creature, though possessed of the most superb bust and figure I ever beheld, wore her rich velvet dress cut high in the neck, and the sleeves close at the wrists. Both the neck and wrists were encircled with a necklace and bracelets of the same bright coral; while strings of coral also twined among the luxuriant tresses of her hair. Her hair she wore waving with artistic negligence down on her shoulders, and its raven, satin-shining blackness was rendered more conspicuous by the coral which was arranged with the greatest taste.

"What a strange woman! What a superb and lovely young creature! Who can she be? Where can she have come from?" were but a few of the exclamations that were uttered by the gay promenaders all round me as the brilliant equipage whirled away down the avenue.

Just at this moment one of the officers of the Elysées chancing to walk up, I said to him:

"Can you give me any information, sir, as to who that beautiful lady is who has created all this excitement?"

"Ah, Madame, he replied," she is a wonder and a mystery even to our gay city of Paris. This is the third day she has appeared driving in the Elysées, and always exactly as you have beheld her, both as regards her own dress and the style of her equipage.

"And does no one know who she is?"

"No Madame, she is a perfect mystery!" Who she is; where she came from; and whither she is going; none can tell. The frequenters here call her '*La Dame au Corail*' or as you would in English say: *The Coral Lady*."

I turned to one of my companions to make some remark, when she almost interrupted me by saying :

"Now my dear, there you have a subject for something far better than the best romance you ever wrote."

"I believe you ; indeed I do ;" answered I, struck forcibly with the suggestion.

"You may depend on it, that lady has a peculiar history, which it would be worth your while obtaining."

"And which I will obtain," laughed I, "if it be at all possible."

At this moment a French lady with her daughter, who had left their carriage for a little stroll, came up, and spoke to my friend, Mrs. Leslie, who thereupon introduced us to each other. I was full of thoughts about the Coral Lady, and, immediately after exchanging the proper courtesies with Madame Tassard and her daughter, I alluded to her.

"My dear Mrs. Southworth," replied Madame Tassard. "She is the most singular, and I should say the most supremely disagreeable personage that has ever afflicted Paris with her presence. Would you credit it; she not only makes no visits in Society ; but she actually refuses to receive any visitors; no matter how fashionable, or exalted, or aristocratic they may be."

"Oh, yes," minced one of the daughters, twiddling her fan affectedly, "she is—ah—perfectly horrid, as Americans beautifully remark."

We held our conversation in French, and I could scarcely refrain from laughing outright at Mademoisellès idea of the beautiful in American language.

"I would be delighted to speak with this singular and lovely being," said I.

"Why would you indeed?" lisped the other Miss Tassard; "Well, I am sure I wish you better fortune than Mama had. But do not allow your feelings to be lacerated by any rude rebuff you may receive, should you attempt to have an audience with the Lady of the Coral."

I answered Miss Tassard that I would consider upon her advice, and after some further conversation, we all returned to our carriages for a final drive previous to returning to our hotels.

Nothing could I get into my mind now but thoughts and conjectures concerning the eccentric and beautiful creature, who had set fashionable Paris by the ears with mystery and wonder, and I was forming all sorts of plans and plots to obtain an introduction, when suddenly the same commotion as before occurred again.

"Here she comes again! Here is the Coral Lady once more!" was uttered by several voices.

I turned and glanced back up the Avenue and beheld the Black and Coral equipage coming dashing down after us at a rapid rate. I ordered our Coachman to rein aside a little and allow the stranger to go by, that I might have another look at the Coral Lady.

At a short distance above us the approaching carriage was suddenly and dexterously brought to a stop, in order, apparently that the Coral Lady might enjoy the scene around, for she at once threw off her former apathy and began looking around in such good earnest that Madame Tassard and her daughter would certainly have denominated it perfectly horrid. The stranger it is true resembled more a person who was looking eagerly for some one rather than merely noticing scenery.

Presently as we all were watching her, her footman approached us and handed me a small plain card on which was written in English: "*Will the American Lady with the Curls permit an interview for a moment with Eloise De Launey?*"

I never recollect being so thoroughly astounded and yet so pleased before in my entire life, and what exact reply I sent I can not even now call to mind. All I know is that against all rules of fashion I actually walked across to where the Coral Lady sat. She rose with a most gracious smile, and extending her hand, exclaimed:

"Ah, my dear madame, you do me far too much honor. I dreamed not of such. I only hoped to have you assent to an interview, and receiving an affirmative, I would have come to you."

"Really Miss," replied I, to be candid with you, I was wishing very earnestly for an opportunity of making your acquaintance." I called her Miss as she was so youthful.

"Were you indeed!" laughed the eccentric woman, "well, well, and I conceived such an overweening curiosity to know you personally that I could no longer resist the inclination to send you my card. But pray be seated, and let us be at ease."

There was a positive fascination about the strangely lovely creature that increased its power over me each succeeding second. I was enraptured with her beauty, her naïveté, and modesty.

As we sat there we became the centre of attraction; all the strollers gazing at us with all the eyes they had—to use a common expression. This did not disturb the equanimity of my companion in the slightest degree, who the moment we were seated, re-opened the conversation with the remark:

"Well now, after informing you that the name on the card you received Eloise De Launey belongs to me, may I inquire your own name? I know you are from America."

I told her my name; and she exhibited much surprise, exclaiming:

"Why are you Mrs. Southworth?" Strange Strange indeed. Yet in America, the name of Southworth has become a household word. The mention of it alters my intention; it thrills, me with new emotions and fixes in my mind a resolution that for some time past has been floating, through my brain somewhere like a dim cloud or shadow. But I cannot tell you now, oh no! not now. My heart

flutters like a wounded bird. Let us change the subject. What beautiful leaves this tree has. I have heard that the species flourishes only in Arabia. Arabia must be a lovely country! Nearly every land have I traveled in save Arabia."

"You seem quite familiar, with languages, Miss De Launey;" said I, as in astonishment I heard her finish her remarks in English after having used both French and Italian. "I am eager to know what clime you are a native of."

"And you shall know; but not to day my dear Friend. What day do you use for visiting? Or do you not have any particular day therefor?"

"None especially set apart for visiting."

"Then will you come and see me to morrow at noon. You have my address. Come by Yourself. I am counted very eccentric. I visit no one nor do I receive any visits from any one. But I have taken such a fancy to you that I have thus made an exception to my rule. In the midst of fashion and the turmoil of life I am nothing but a recluse, a hermit."

"I see that you, as well as others, look upon me as a mystery—my bronzed face, my mode of dressing—excite your most intense curiosity."

I acknowledged that she was correct, and she resumed:

"You must come and see me tomorrow at noon as I have asked you to do and you shall have my history or at least part of it."

"It must be a strange one," remarked I.

"You will say so more earnestly than now when you hear it. But I have overstayed my time from home. Adieu, and Heaven's goodangel be with you till we meet again. Remember, tomorrow at noon, and alone. Adieu."

Thus speaking the lovely, mysterious girl—for in appearance at least she was such—gave my hand a warm squeeze, sprang lightly into her carriage, which almost instantly whirled away down the Avenue, leaving me wrapt up more completely than ever in wonder and amazement.

I rejoined the group of my friends who instead of driving to their hotels had all dismounted again and were anxiously awaiting me, expecting doubtless that I would have some interminable and rich piece of gossip to impart to them concerning the Coral Lady. Their anxiety, however, was turned only into disappointment when I told the extent and nature of my interview, excepting the invitation to visit Eloise, which I did not mention for fear it might require me to deny the instant and importunate applications, I knew would have been thrust at me to take a friend with me.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Kind Reader, you doubtless know what suspense is. If you are a lady you have perhaps experienced that peculiar sensation which takes possession of young ladies generally, when it only lacks a day of the pic-nic, or party, or ball to which your affianced lover is to accompany you in your new yet incomplete relation. If you are of the *genus homo*, reverse the comparison. Do you know what it is? If so, triple it, and you may have a faint idea of the intense suspense that held possession of me from the moment I parted with the mysterious Coral Lady, in the Champs Elyseés till I stood at the portal of her house or hotel as Parisians say, in the Rue Richelieu.

She occupied the whole building the rent of which must have been many thousands of francs on account of its locality and size. This proved her to be of enormous wealth; for very very few, even of the first families of Paris can afford the luxury of a whole house in a fashionable quarter to themselves.

As the ancient bell of Notre Dame tolled forth the hour of noon my suspense began to diminish or rather it had reached its acmé, for I was punctual, and at that time stood before Eloise De Launey's door awaiting admittance where no other visitor had as yet been permitted.

The dark visaged footman, dressed in the self same uniform as he wore on the Coach, opened to me and on taking my card, instead of asking me into a waiting cabinet or room he led me after him with the remark:

"Will Madame, please follow. Such are my orders."

Along the hall, and up a flight of stairs to the second story I went in obedience to this request uttered so politely, and presently my guide approached a door covered with black velvet on which were symbolistic characters marked in strings of blood-red Coral.

"Will Madame, please to enter when I open the door, and if my mistress the 'Lady of the Coral' be engaged in devotion do not disturb her, but await what she may say. Enter quickly."

As he said this the footman pulled a lever in the door jam, the door opened suddenly, I stepped quickly in as I had been asked to do, and like a flash the portal was again closed by the ebony servant.

I stood in the private apartment of the strangest, most mysterious woman that had ever been heard of, and Romance indeed was beginning to flap her fairy wing over my senses.

“The only hope that keeps me alive,” said she, sadly, “is, that some day I may yet find my darling child!”



If by some magical transporting power I had been taken by the hand, and lifted from the cold and uninviting scenery of a Northern land, and placed in an instant after in the midst of some glowing luxuriant clime of the Oriental Tropics, my astonishment could not have been half as great as when I stepped thus from gay, dashing, frivolous Paris, into this apartment, where all the Barbaric Splendors of Eastern Countries dazzled my eyes, and the unknown but delicious perfumes, distilled from sacred gums and spices made my senses grow dim with their exquisite odors, and held me spell bound as though a million of fairies had each quivering nerve a captive.

Nor was music wanting to complete the ethereal scene around me ; for, beside the warblings of birds in gilded cages—whose notes were entirely strange to my ears—there came floating to me as though far away from some dream realm, dulcet strains of combined vocal and instrumental music.

“Is this magic?” whispered I to myself almost trembling with the new sensations my situation inspired within me. I saw no one in the immense room or rather saloon, which instead of being lighted in the usual manner (for the reader will remember it was noonday) was illuminated by candelabras, at regular intervals along the walls, and in which Candelabras burned candles of perfumed wax.

The walls were draped and hung with rich coral and black velvet and silk hangings, while interspersed among the festoons with the utmost elegance of taste, were ornaments of alabaster, onyx, bronze ; and richly enameled paintings. Looking along the apartment I was bewildered with the almost numberless varieties, and beauty of the furniture, though one peculiarity struck me with much force which was that among all this gorgeous furnishing there was not a single chair visible. Divans and Ottomans and cushions and rugs all of such magnificent material and luxurious appearance as to almost defy comparison, much less imitation. There were also many tables of strange and handsome material but of a style such as is only used in the Far East.

The screens of which I have spoken were at once the most splendid specimens of art that I have ever beheld. Some were of silk, others of satin and velvet ; all embroidered in the superbest manner, and mounted upon antique and odd-shaped frames, that moved in any direction at the slightest touch.

Another peculiarity I noted was that the floor instead of being carpeted was covered with beautiful rugs in which the feet sank deeply at every step.

Reader, do not imagine that, because I have been somewhat long and prosey in my description of the *Salon* of the Coral Lady, I was long in seeing its details and beauties and singularities, for my eyes drank in all

at a few glances. You may imagine however, if you can, how intense became my curiosity, to behold the eccentric and lovely mistress of this magnificence, and to listen to her life history from her own lips.

After the first *startle* of the scene had left me, I became composed, and stepped leisurely forward, scanning everything to the right and left as I proceeded. I had not gone far, however, when from behind a screen came two beautiful young women dressed in the peculiar costume worn by the highest classes in the Islands of Java and Sumatra. Their complexion was of exactly the same shining bronze shade as that of their mistress.

Making a low obeisance after the custom of their country the two advanced again, and each took one of my hands. By them I was then led four or five yards further on to a spot where several screens were so arranged as to form a complete room of good size. At the entrance my *houris* guides left me, after doing obeisance to their mistress, the Coral Lady who was the sole occupant of the artificial apartment.

She was attired in a loose, graceful robe of black velvet embroidered in a weird manner with Coral beads and Coral colored silk. She had nothing on her head; but her raven, shining tresses floating down back over her shoulders were adorned with a tasteful looping of Coral beads. No jewelry of any description was worn by her excepting a large single diamond of the utmost brilliancy clasped in a hand cut from red Coral, which caught her robe at the throat. The moment she saw me, Eloise sprang from the Ottoman on which she had been reclining, and taking me by both hands, seated me on a second ottoman close against hers, and had my shawl, bonnet, etc. removed and laid away on a Divan, almost in a moment or two.

Before describing the greeting I received, however, I must speak of the Contents of this private apartment of the Coral Lady. Three or four divans and ottomans were in it in place of chairs. In one corner was a couch covered with Leopard and Tiger skins which formed a strong and striking contrast to the snowy white sheets and pillow cases, which, strangely enough, were of plain white linen, and without the slightest ornamentation. On one table was a heap of books, on another a workbasket, while a third was taken up with an inlaid, finely wrought sandalwood desk; and yet a fourth served as a rest for two cages, each of which contained several beautiful birds. This scene was completed by the mistress herself, who had evidently been playing upon a sort of lute; such as is used in Persia and Hindostan, and which in the skilled hands of the natives of these lands, produces the most exquisite and affecting music of any stringed instrument in existence.

I have said completed; but I neglected to mention that on the divan on which laid the lute, was also an open box containing a pair of silver mounted Revolving Pistols, which I saw were loaded by the copper caps being on the nipples.

I must confess that the sight of these deadly weapons gave me for a moment a disagreeable chill, and caused some of my romantic sensations to be replaced with such pleasant surmises as "suppose this woman is a lunatic and has brought me hither to kill me; or suppose she is a wicked woman and has some foul designs on me." But when I looked into the face of Eloise I saw that she was neither a crazy nor a wicked woman; so I forced myself to feel more comfortable. And she had not spoken a dozen words ere all my faintest apprehensions vanished; as the mist of a September morning vanishes before the genial warmth of the early glowing sun.

For half an hour my lovely and eccentric companion conversed only on general topics; and I was beginning to be apprehensive that I should get none of the personal history she had promised and for which I was so eagerly longing, when suddenly she commenced it of her own accord as follows.

EARLY LIFE OF ELOISE.

"You asked me yesterday, my dear Friend, of what country I was a native, and I told you, I think, you would be surprised, and I know you will when I inform you that I am an American; that I am what you call there a Creole, being a full descendant of the De Launey family, which perhaps you are aware was one of the wealthiest and most aristocratic of the original French families of Louisiana.

"That does in truth surprise me much," I remarked, "for though the fluency of your language might prove you an American, your complexion would indicate other than Creole parentage.

"Entirely correct, my dear Friend. Yet that only shows the fallacy of judging from appearances. But you shall learn of that in the course of my narrative.

"As I have said, my family occupied an enviable position in Society in Louisiana, though we were best known in New Orleans where we resided during the Winter. During the Summer we lived on a beautiful paradise of a spot, seven miles from Greensburg and near the New Orleans and Jackson Rail Road.

"Immediately adjoining our rural villa was an extensive plantation owned by an old gentleman named Darnelle, who had but one child, a son named Herbert. Being thus neighbors we soon became friends. Herbert and myself being almost of the same age and of opposite temperaments, rapidly kindled within each other's breast sentiments of affection, which additional time intensified into a burning fervid love.

"We used to ride, fish, walk, and read together; together we used to visit the quarters of the slaves and look after their comfort; and together we used to sit for hours building fairy castles in the thin air of the future. How happy I was in those sunny days language could never depict nor imagination paint.

"Alas! however, there came a cloud, chilling our atmosphere and hiding the sunlight. Herbert's father, though well aware from the first of his son's affection for me and of my love for him, suddenly determined that Herbert should wed the daughter of a gentleman in New Orleans, whose name as a Banker has since become world-wide in prominence. The only reason Mr. Darnelle vouchsafed to give his son was, that he desired the proposed Union to be consummated for the purpose of bringing his family and that of the Banker into marital as well as business connections. In vain did Herbert plead that he did not then, nor could he ever, love the young lady, although he could respect her as a friend. Mr. Darnelle was inexorable, though he did finally consent to allow a year to elapse ere the consummation of the marriage.

"The next time we met after his father's decision had been thus made, both Herbert and I were cast down with sorrow, and many a plan did we discuss for getting around the difficulty. But none could we hit upon and we finally parted with the determination to quietly await the course of events; and we repeated the vows we had before made to each other of mutual and everlasting love and devotion.

"Come what will," said Herbert, as he kissed me good by, "come what will, I shall never marry that woman; not that I dislike her; she is good, she is handsome, and I know that she would be delighted to become my wife; but my heart, dearest Eloise, is your own and no other woman shall ever possess it.

"My surcharged feelings prevented the utterance of any audible reply to this sweet declaration of Herbert's, and I could only show my grateful love in looks, and in one burning kiss that I imprinted on his lips. Oh; my dear Friend, I loved that man from that moment forward with the madness of despair.

"We did not meet each other quite so often after this as previously; but with each new meeting and parting our love seemed to burn into brighter fiercer flame than ever. In one fell moment we agreed to be each other's without the sacred sanction of the wedlock bond. For to have done so would have swept Herbert's inheritance from him and he would have become a penniless outcast. And besides he had solemnly promised never to marry the Banker's daughter, and with equal solemnity did he promise to be as true to me as though a hundred marriage certificates bound us.

"Ten months of happiness unalloyed, followed, and then came an event which materially altered the future. This was the sudden demise of Herbert's father, caused by apoplexy. There was no will made, for Mr.



"You come to take my darling child to him! But, woman as I am; and alone! I defy you!"

Darnelle had purposely abstained from executing one until he should see Herbert safely married to the young lady he had chosen for him, when it had been his intention to bestow all his worldly possessions on his son, and daughter-in-law.

"Of course this sad event—sad in one way, but propitious in another—relieved Herbert from further obligations, and he became master of his own affairs. His first act was to break off all further connection with the banker's family, giving as a reason that he had for a length of time already been married to myself. Here was the second wrong step. But Herbert speedily quieted my anxiety on the subject, by arguing that our intimacy had been so watched and so well known, that to have a public marriage now would be a certain blasting of my reputation and consequently a disastrous sully of his own name.

"This was sufficient, for no matter how my name might suffer, I loved Herbert too dearly to jeopardize his reputation and I readily consented to his proposition to go to New Orleans with him. There we took handsome apartments, first at the St. Charles Hotel, and afterwards in the upper part of the city.

"Shortly after this I became the mother of a sweet little girl, whom Herbert called after me, Eloise.

"Oh, my dear Friend, between then and now what a frightful, frightful sea of unhappiness and despair has rolled itself, a sea whose ever disturbed billows are always lashing themselves upon my heart and making it bleaker and more desolate each advancing year.

"Up to the time that little Eloise was two years old there was no change in Herbert's manner toward me. He was ever loving and all that I could wish. But about this time, however, I was quick to notice that there was an alteration in him, and my heart began to misgive me. I strove, oh, so hard, so earnestly, to drive from me the suspicion that his love for me was beginning to wane. Herbert is a man of his word; his word is better than most others' bonds, and he has solemnly pledged his word and his sacred honor to be true to me. I could not would not believe otherwise. And yet continually in the daytime while I carressed and gamboled with Eloise; and even with Herbert's arm around me and his eyes looking into mine, there would arise before me that new, gaunt shadow like a cloudy ill-omened spectre out of the ground. In the stilly hours of the night, too, with my darling babe nestling upon my bosom I often awakened to find the same spectre, intangible yet always there. It seemed to say:

"'Herbert is tired of you!'

"At this time I had a young and handsome German girl as a sort of companion. She was from Berlin where she had received a polished education. She had emigrated to America two years previously, where having the misfortune to lose her mother by yellow fever, she was left in

reduced circumstances. By chance I came across her about that period and from me she at once accepted the position of nurse-governess to little Eloise. Very soon a strong and enduring friendship grew up between her and myself. She was so good and kind that I could not tell who loved her most, I or Eloise.

"One day she came in, apparently in much mental trouble, though she evidently made strenuous efforts to conceal it from me. Something impressed me that it was caused on my account, rather than her own, and, with a sickening dread, but also an unalterable determination, I forced her to tell me the cause.

" 'I cannot tell you, Madame,' said she 'for I may possible be mistaken, and at best my statement would make you exceedingly unhappy.'

" 'Oh, Lena Lena!' I exclaimed, 'I think I know what you would say. But though I dread to hear; yet I must know all. You would speak of Mr. Darnelle and——and——some lady. Is it not so?'

"Lena nodded her head! A dagger driven through my heart would not have stricken me down so instantaneously as did this silent but terrible affirmative of Lena's to my question. I sank upon a sofa and burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping agony.

" 'Oh, dearest Herbert! my own, do not cast me off thus from you for another! I can die in this world; in the next if necessary; but to lose *you* thus——Oh, God! I cannot! I cannot! No! no! Here, on my bended knees, I implore you! I invoke you by the halcyon hours of the past! I conjure you by the same word of honor that you have so often pledged to me, not to thus cast me from you!'

"I had sprung from the sofa and found myself kneeling before a Portrait of Herbert, my hands clasped and my face wet with scalding tears. Lena was bending over me endeavoring to comfort me with well ment but useless words of consolation, while little Eloise with her dear tiny arms round my neck, was crying and covering my cheek with kisses.

"I could not subdue the paroxysm of grief that had taken possession of me though my pride was wounded by allowing myself to be seen by Lena kneeling thus before Herbert's portrait. Not for at least an hour did I become calm enough to consider the matter coolly. But when I did, I began to feel anger and revenge rising within me, especially toward her who had thus destroyed my peace and happiness forever.

" 'Oh, Lena!' said I at last, 'if I could only find out the rights and particulars of this affair!'

" 'Tell me, only tell me, how I can be of assistance to you, Madame,' replied Lena, 'and I will do the utmost in my power to serve you.'

" 'Well, Lena, I know I can trust you. Now then go, and watch one or the other, or both, and bring me some positive information on which I may act myself. Here is money in this porte-monaie; do not spare it if necessary to the accomplishment of your object. Remember you are

aiding a much injured woman, and one who knows how to reward faithfulness.'

"'Do not speak of reward, Mrs. Darnelle, I beg of you, do not speak of reward to me,' said Lena. 'I obey you because I love you, and I am sorry for you; not because of any reward I might earn, for I would scorn to do for money what I would cheerfully do for a good cause.'

"'I know that, Lena, I know it. I ment nothing by my remark. But I am nearly beside myself. Go now, there's a dear, good girl; go and make my suspense as short as possible!'

"Taking Eloise up in my arms, I went to my bed room to await Lena's return; and during the succeeding two hours no tongue can tell what agony of mind I suffered.

A VISIT FROM HERBERT.

About this time, as I was pacing the room, the sound of footsteps attracted my attention, and a moment afterwards Herbert Darnelle stood before me. By a superhuman effort I crushed down both my sorrow and my anger, and greeted him as usual, for there was now a plot in my mind, and it became necessary for me to dissemble. Yet he did not fail to perceive that something unusual had occurred, and he said:

"'Why Eloise, what is the matter with you?'

"'I longed to fling my arms about him, and tell him all, and endeavor to win him back. But my pride would not permit that, and I merely replied in a casual way:

"'Oh nothing much; only a sick headache and——'

"'I intended to add 'heartache,' but I caught the word back before it fell from my tongue, and turning away from him, I took up Eloise. She was my only remaining joy.

"'A pause ensued of several moments' and then, as Herbert seated himself—not beside me as he used to do, however—he said:

"'Well, it causes you to be considerably cross and ill-natured. Do you know you are much altered of late in your manner towards me, Eloise?'

"'Am I?' said I, 'that, may be, is true; and have I not good cause?'

"'What do you mean by that?' he inquired.

"'You know as well as I can tell you!' I answered. 'Here, only a while ago, this very day, you were in company with some woman.'

"'Well, bless my soul!' he exclaimed, in a tone of anger, that I instantly saw was assumed for the occasion, 'cannot I be seen with a

lady on the street without being taken to task by you. I want you to understand, that what I may do, or not do, is no business of yours!"

"Possibly!" was all I said.

"No!" he exclaimed, "there is no possibly about it!"

"I said no more, but sat rocking Eloise and crying. At last Herbert got up, and began drawing on his gloves slowly as though he had come upon a disagreeable errand and did not like to broach the subject till he should be ready to go. His gloves on, he took up his hat, and coming near to me, kissed Eloise very friendly but did not kiss me. Then as he stood up he said:

"Eloise, I am going up to the plantation and shall not be back for a week or so. You will not be lonesome while I am away."

"I would like you to answer me truly, one question," said I, looking up at him.

"Well, what is it?"

"Are you going alone to the plantation?"

"That is none of your business; but, since you have asked it, I might as well tell you that I shall not go alone."

"And, perhaps, added I, sarcastically, 'since you are so exceedingly candid, you will also acknowledge that the lady you have already been seen with to day is the same one that is to bear you company up to the plantation.'

"That is exactly so," he rejoined "why you must be a wizardess!"

"There was such a callousness in his tones—though it was assumed—and the change altogether was so unexpected and sudden—that I was as it were, dumbfounded. But I speedily began to comprehend all, and, between struggling love, pride and anguish, I felt as though my heart would break. But I instantly resolved on my course.

"Herbert," said I "I see through it all. You have seen another woman, you like better than me. I am now an incubus, that you would gladly be rid of. Ah, Herbert! Herbert! had a prophet ever told me that this day was to have dawned upon me I would not have believed him. Not four years ago, one lovely Summer evening, as you and I kneeled together beneath the blooming Orange tree at home, I pledged my heart, my love to you, and you pledged your solemn honor to me. In the presence of God's Angels we promised to be true to each other forever! Forever! that was the word. To day you come to me, and deliberately tell me you have broken your word of honor. You! who would call out a man and shoot him down for even questioning your honor, you bring the sullied fragments of it to me and cast them at my feet!"

"Herbert Darnelle, though no human eye witnessed our secret, nuptials; and though I hold not the written Certificate so justly prized by every virtuous woman, I am, in the sight of God, your true and virtuous wife. I said to you; 'Herbert, I will be your own from now till Death parts us.

You said; the same to me. To day you cast me off for another! So be it! You break your word of honor like a dastard craven; I shall keep mine, if I live a hundred years. Your honor and my poor, trusting heart are now broken. Oh, Herbert! for God's sake leave me now, and go to your new found love! Do not torture me any longer with your presence but leave me! And warn that woman, always to avoid me; or I will have her heart's blood!

"'Why, Eloise,' said he, 'it is you who are making our parting so sudden and unfriendly. I desired that it should be gradual and as friendly as possible. I shall provide amply for your comfort, you know, besides relieving you of the unnecessary burden of Eloise.'

"'This fired the mine of fury within me. I sprang up, bounded to my desk, and taking therefrom a poignard whose handle was of fine red coral, I exclaimed:

"'You would add damnable insult to damnable injury! But mark me, I am a Creole! and the moment you attempt to take my child from me, my love will turn to hate; and this dagger's blade shall become as red as its handle, not only in your paramour's blood, but also in your own! Nor do I want your money. I have enough to rear Eloise in honest poverty, and be assured if she is spared to me I shall teach her never to trust her reputation in the keeping of such word of honor as her father's! So, now farewell—Oh God! that I must say it to you, Herbert—farewell——*forever!*'

"I sank back on a chair, still pressing Eloise close to me. After remaining a few moments, as though undecided what to do, Herbert suddenly strode out of the room.

"'This world is dark and dreary to me now!' I moaned to myself, as I saw him whom I so indolized, thus leave me with the avowed intention of taking up with that woman. And then hour after hour I walked back and forth, back and forth in my room passing before my mind's eye the delightful scenes of the past that were to return never more, never more.

"Thus was I occupied when Lena came back.

"'He has been here, Lena,' said I.

"'Yes Ma'am, I know it,' was her answer. I saw him come in, I saw him come out, I followed him, and saw him join that lady—whose name is Ann Rivel—in Lispenard Street. I then followed them so closely and so cautiously, that I heard much of their conversation, and yet did not attract their attention to myself. Oh, Ma'am, that's a vile hussey, if ever there was one in this world! From what I could hear I should guess Mr. Darnelle intends to sell his plantation, and then go on a European tour with Ann Rivel. Before they start he is going to steal little Eloise away from you and take her to Europe, too.

"'He said something about you going on like a wild woman, and threatening to kill somebody, and they both laughed at that. Oh, I as-

sure you, Mrs. Darnelle, I felt so furious angry at them for talking so, that I could have cowhided them both with a very good will. And I think they both ought to be ashamed of themselves. But they are not, and we shall have to take good care of darling little Eloise, or they will steal her away.'

"My dear friend," concluded the narrator, I cannot trust myself to continue this history to day. My feelings when I think of my poor child master me. I pray you let us change the subject. Tomorrow I will resume where I leave off to day. Shall I play for you?"

I sympathizingly expressed my regret at the inability of my lovely companion to finish her narrative, and gladly would I listen to her playing. She took up the lute, or *guzla*, as the Persians call it, and after tuning it, she sang a wild, thrilling melody in some unknown tongue — the most touchingly mournful strains I ever listened to.

"That," said she when she had finished, is the song that mothers sing in Sumatra when they have lost their children. It is pretty, and I am very fond of it. She sang two or three other melodies, all partaking of the mournful character of the first, and then suddenly putting away the *guzla* she sounded a small silver gong with two strokes, which was promptly answered by one of the young woman who had met me.

Eloise spoke to her a few words in a language I did not understand, and then as the maiden disappeared she resumed her conversation with me, speaking of the Exposition and the efforts of the competing nations to surpass each other. I found her marvelously well informed on almost every subject of science and the mechanical arts, and there was such a genial freedom and suavity about her conversation, that I felt as little restraint in her presence—notwithstanding all her mysterious surroundings—as though she had been my own sister.

Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, one of the screens that formed the room was moved noiselessly back, disclosing a second artificial room formed by other screens, and containing a table on which in golden dishes were served up many different kinds of fruit and preserves with bread; while on a kind of side table stood several bottles of wine with golden cups instead of glasses.

"You must dine with me," said my hostess, taking my hand and placing me on an ottoman that was drawn up to the table.

I never made a more delicious meal in my life; for such fruits and preserves it has never been my fortune to come across. During the course of the repast Eloise informed me that she never ate anything at all except fruits, preserves, and bread, and never drank anything save wine and water.

It was dark ere I bade my strange friend adieu, and I found her carriage at the door ready to take me to my hotel. I promised to come the next day at noon, and thus ended my first interview with Eloise De Launey.

THE SECOND INTERVIEW.

It was late in the night before I could get to sleep on account of thinking over the interview I had had with the strange Lady of the Coral; and also of the coming one the next day. My slumber also, though not disturbed by, was filled with, dreams of Eloise. I did not loiter in the morning, but was promptly at the door of Eloise by twelve o'clock. The footman had nothing to say on this occasion; but bowing low, at once preceded me to the *Salon* of his Mistress who received me even more pleasantly than yesterday. We had a general conversation for a short time and then suddenly, the same as the day previous, Eloise resumed her life narrative.

"'I broke off yesterday,' said she, at the point where Lena followed Herbert and Ann Rivel. She had traced them to the St. Charles Hotel, and having inquired in the office had found out the numbers of their rooms, which were the same ones exactly as I had once occupied. Thus, bitter and more bitter became the wormwood in the cup that Ill Fortune was holding to my lips. I felt that this indeed was the retribution attending the dreadful error I had made in submitting to Herbert's desires and the promptings of my own love for him.

"'I will take my darling Child' said I to myself, 'go away from here, far away, where she nor I will never see nor hear of her father, and spend the future in redeeming the past.'

"The next day I went out for the purpose of engaging rooms; but apartments chancing just then to be very scarce, I did not succeed in procuring any, and by evening I returned home utterly worn out with fatigue. Lena had kept faithfully by Eloise during the whole time I had been out. On hearing of my non-success, Lena suggested that a lady, whom I knew, had been speaking of an acquaintance of hers who was desirous of letting a part of her house to a person of unquestionable respectability. I was too tired to go myself, so I sent Lena with a message to the lady in regard to the matter.

"Little Eloise was exceedingly glad to see me return home, and she and I spent several hours in play. It lightened my own sad heart to thus make pleasure for my Child. Time passed away, and it began to get late. Still Lena did not come, and I commenced to feel much anxiety about her. Yet, thinking she must have been detained, I sat down and rocked Eloise to sleep.

"How long it was before I myself fell asleep; or how long I slumbered when I did, it would be quite impossible for me to say; but I was aroused by somebody turning a key in the lock of my door—which latter I had

secured immediately after Lena's departure. I knew that if it were Lena, she would knock and then call me by name. And there was no one else who had any right or occasion to enter my room. Suddenly the conviction flashed upon me that it was Herbert came to force me to give him our child. The idea of Herbert coming like a robber to do me a violence so startled and non-plussed me that I was unable even to raise my head off my arm; but sat helplessly watching when the door, which I had been so careful to lock, should open.

"I had not long to wait; for almost immediately the handle was turned and the door being pushed back, there came in——not Herbert Darnelle, but three tall, powerful looking men each of them masked. In a moment my fear left me, and rising, I said:

"Gentlemen, you have certainly mistaken the apartment. So I will be obliged to you if you will retire."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Darnelle, there's no mistake, nor can we retire. How's little Eloise?"

"The fury and strength of a lioness took possession of me, while at the same instant Eloise, awakened by the strange, rough voices, clung to me and began to cry piteously.

"There, there, my darling' said I, 'hush; no one shall hurt you,' and catching the child up, I pressed her trembling little form to my own throbbing bosom. The men looked at each other and then nodding, I supposed by way of a concerted signal, all began to approach me. But like a flash of lightning I sprang behind the table, and drawing my poignard, which was a large one, I exclaimed:

"Brutes! I know you errand. You come from Herbert Darnelle to take this child to him! But you shall not do it! No! by Heaven, woman as I am, and alone, I defy you, one and all!"

"Don't go on so tragically, Mrs. Darnelle!" answered he who appeared to be the leader of the other two; because we would be sorry to do you any harm; but we must have that child, though we are not going to take it to Herbert Darnelle."

"Help! help! murder!" I screamed as loudly as I could, still keeping my poignard raised with the determination of driving it into the heart of the first who should come near enough. But, as the sequel proved, though armed thus formidably, I was no match for my athletic foes. Almost in a moment a heavy cloak was thrown over me, and Eloise and I were borne carefully but irresistibly to the floor. Then I was disarmed by one while another held his hand over my mouth, and the third, unclasping my poor weak arm from about Eloise took her from me, and immediately stifled her cries and sobs.

"Quick! give me the sponge!" I heard the man say who was holding me down. The next moment I felt the excessively coldness of a sponge of chloroform upon my lip, and then, even while I became aware of the fact, I sank into insensibility.

The bold horseman urged his steed to its best speed to save the trembling girl from her pursuers.



"When this terrible enthrallment was lifted from my senses, so like death, I found myself, not in the luxuriantly furnished apartment from which I had despatched Lena on her errand; but in a low-ceilinged, small, meanly appointed room, the walls of which were damp and mouldy, while all round the joint of wall and ceiling were dark, heavy cob-webs, that seemed to have required years to attain their present enormous size.

"It was broad day-light. One old wooden chair, a rickety table and two of my own trunks formed the only furniture of the place, the floor even, not having a scrap of carpet upon it.

"I could not describe my feelings as I looked around upon this desolate cheerless room and its contents, I was so utterly bewildered. Gradually, however, I began to gather my scattered senses, and then my situation burst upon me like a dreadful avalanche. For myself I cared not, but my agony became unendurable when I comprehended fully that little Eloise, my darling child, my future guiding star, was really gone. I called her, but there came not the answer of her sweet voice. Alas! no! I was not only deserted like a common outcast of society, but also robbed of my precious treasure by Herbert! Herbert, whom I had loved so dearly! Herbert, who had so often pressed me to his heart and told me that nothing but Death should ever part us; who had vowed upon his sacred honor that harm should never come to me, or my good name.

"'There's a letter!' I exclaimed, as I rose up and saw an envelope upon the table. Quickly tearing it open, I read the contents. The letter was from Herbert. He wrote that the ruffians had come from him, that he had Eloise and would love her for my sake, that he had become infatuated with Ann Rivel, felt driven to his fate, expressed great sorrow that this cloud should have arisen, hoped that I would learn to forget him, and finally as he could not bear the idea of my ever coming to want, he enclosed me a check for ten thousand dollars, which he hoped would be satisfactory. In a Postscript he added the advice not to attempt to find him as he would by this time be on his way to a foreign land where he intended to spend at least several years.

"I sat down on the chair, and then on the floor, for half an hour at least, twiddling the note, and the check, and the envelope, like a person struck with idiotcy. He had not explained why I had been removed from my apartment to this hovel of a room, nor why he had given me only two trunks, while my dresses and other little matters alone would have filled at least six such trunks, and yet he had given a check for so large a sum as ten thousand dollars. Then the idea suggested itself to me to look what was in the trunks. This I quickly did, and found nothing in them save a few of my second best dresses and shawls, two bonnets and two pairs of gaiters. I scarcely knew what to think about this. First I thought, perhaps Lena had been induced to join against me, and had received my best clothes and some money as a reward. But I dismissed

that idea instantly from my mind; I could not think of her true honest face and credit such a thing. There was but one other conclusion—Ann Rivel, the vile usurper of my place in Herbert Darnelle's heart, had also taken all my valuable clothes and jewels for herself. In that moment the Devil took possession of me, and with a cold, bitter laugh, I searched for my Coral handled poignard. But that also was gone.

"Then I went down on my knees and vowed to have vengeance on both Herbert and his paramour; and to pursue them if necessary to the ends of the earth and rescue my little Eloise from them. So, putting on the best of the dresses, one of the bonnets, and a shawl, I went to the room door. It was not locked. I opened it, and stepped out into the dingy little entry, went down the dirty stairs to a kind of kitchen, where I found an old negress, who refused to tell me anything except that Massa Darnelle had told her not to say one word to me.

"I left the hut, and walking up the road some distance, I met a slave driving a light wagon. Of him I inquired the way, and found that I was about five miles from New Orleans. He was going three miles further on. I asked him to let me get up and ride with him as far as he should go. He seemed very much astonished; but, nevertheless, made no objection. At the end of his journey I gave him a gold dollar, which doubtless seemed like a fortune to him, and which, I have as little doubt, materially, improved his opinion of me. The other two miles I walked to the City. The first place I went to was the bank on which the check was drawn, and where I obtained the money without any trouble.

"Now, then, my task of vengeance was to begin. Before doing anything, however, I determined to find Lena."

At this point in her narrative Eloise rested, and we dined together in the same manner as we had done the previous day. During our repast general subjects occupied our conversation, nor did she resume her history until fully half an hour after the end of our dinner.

ELOISE IN PURSUIT.

"I was not long in ascertaining the whereabouts of Lena, and when I found her she had almost as strange and thrilling an account of adventures to tell as I had myself. Shortly after she had left the house on the errand I had sent her to do, she was accosted by three men who called her by name and asked her where she was going to. She gave them a sharp answer, when they instantly seized her, thrust a gag into her mouth, and hurried down a dark street close by. Here there was a carriage waiting, into which Lena was lifted by two of the men, while the other, mounting the driver's seat, lashed the horses in a gallop.

"As they drove along one of the men informed Lena that no harm was intended her; that they only ment to take her to Herbert Darnelle, who having taken his daughter Eloise away from her mother, and knowing that she was very fond of her (Lena) desired to make sure of still retaining her as nurse-governess to little Eloise. After driving some distance the carriage was turned into a yard belonging to a kind of hotel or tavern. By the light of the moon, which was just beginning to rise, Lena noticed a countryman who was saddling a horse. Something impressed her to appeal to him to rescue her from her captors, who she did not believe came from Herbert Darnelle, for this reason. They had said that Herbert already had taken Eloise, and she knew that the child was safely with me when she left home so shortly before her own capture.

"Lena was a brave, prompt girl, and no sooner had she conceived the project than she put it in execution. Watching her opportunity, she sprang away from her captors, and running to the man—relieving herself of the gag as she ran—she hastily told him her tale of woe. She was closely pursued by the three men, who seized her and were dragging her back again, when the stranger stepped forward and in a stern voice ordered them to stop.

"'Knife him!' cried one of the ruffians; and immediately there was a fierce combat between them and their intended victim. The latter, however, though light built, was an active and powerful man, and laid about him with his loaded whip with such address and strength, as to beat off his assailants.—Suddenly one of them made a shrill call on a whistle.

"'Quick!' cried the rescuer to Lena, 'run to my horse!'
Lena did so, and her friend following her vaulted into the stirrups caught her up on his lap, and bidding her hold him tight round the neck, dashed away before the ruffians recovered from their surprise. But in a few minutes more the latter were also mounted and in pursuit. Fortunately after a furious ride, the rescuer met a squad of mounted policemen. Two of these brought Lena back to the city, and the others with her rescuer gave chase to the ruffians who, however, easily escaped, and were doubtless the same men who immediately afterward came and took Eloise away from me.

"I then told Lena all that had occurred to myself, and also informed her of my intentions. Instead, however, of wishing to leave me, she expressed the determination to stay with me till death. She was now in my dark hour of adversity the only friend I had; and I at once accepted her offer, feeling that she would be of the most material assistance to me, for she loved little Eloise sincerely.

"The first step was to find a trace of Herbert and his paramour which I speedily did at a small cost by employing a regular detective officer. The morning after the night on which I had been robbed of my child, Herbert taking her and Ann Rivel had sailed for Paris in a steamer. It is almost needless to add that the next steamer leaving New Orleans for Paris took out Lena and myself.

CHASED DOWN AT LAST.

"By contrary winds and stormy weather our vessel was delayed a full week beyond the time she should have arrived at her destination, and we had considerable difficulty in obtaining our next clue to Herbert and his paramour. Our perseverance was finally rewarded, however, by learning that they had gone to Italy. To Italy we also immediately started, where again the old difficulty recurred of getting a trace of my intended prey.

"It would be far too tedious a task to detail to you the almost numberless routes we took, and places we went to, and the disappointments we suffered in our pursuit. The fugitives were invariably from five days to two weeks in advance of us, and they travelled by such irregular routes, that half our time was consumed when we got into a town in finding out the way they had taken.

"But notwithstanding all this my determination never wavered for a single instant. Lena was equally enthusiastic, and finally we tracked Herbert and his *wife*—that was what he styled the vile wretch, Ann Rivel—to that notorious den of European fashion and vice, Baden Baden. We were only a few hours behind them now, for which I fervently thanked Heaven; as the large outlays I had been constantly making since the commencement of my journey had made heavy inroads on my purse.

"Hitherto I was constantly in a fever to get within reach of the guilty pair that I might take instant vengeance upon them. But now that I nearly had my hands on them I suddenly became cautious. I thought of my darling Eloise, and this brought on new trains of thought more rational. If I could only steal her away from them I argued with myself and let them both go their ways, I obtain my priceless treasure and shall be contented and happy for the rest of my days; whereas, if I were even to kill them both she would be left entirely alone in the world, without even the shadow of a protector. So I quickly changed my plan.

"I still had three thousand dollars left, and I proposed, after obtaining possession of my child to set out at once upon my return to America, there to settle down in some obscure town and live only for Eloise. I soon found out—or rather Lena found out—the exact hotel at which Herbert had taken apartments, and I promptly secured apartments in another hotel a square or two below it.



The only sign of life was a king black-bird, perched on the window sill, singing cheerily. And the Judge said that no hand but that of a deeply wronged wife could ever have taken such vengeance on a false husband. Besides the dagger handle was of red coral!

On the second afternoon after I had taken these apartments—one of which fronted on the main street or promenade of the city—I was lying down very sick with a semi-nervous attack, caused no doubt by the sudden increase of the exciting circumstances by which I was surrounded. All at once Lena called me to come to the window; that Ann Rivel was passing by. Headache and nervousness were gone in an instant, and springing up, I bounded to the window.

“‘Don’t let her see you, Mrs. Darnelle!’ exclaimed Lena, pressing me back with her upraised arm, ‘she is looking up here now and making motions.’”

Thus admonished, I drew the curtain quickly before my face and glancing cautiously out, I beheld my hated, wicked rival walking up to her hotel leaning on the arm—not of Herbert as I had expected—but of a tall man, dressed in the extreme of fashion; evidently a professional gambler, and just as evidently a villain of the worst description. But the strangest and really startling fact was that both were looking up at the hotel I was putting up at, talking very earnestly, and now and then pointing over. I thought I had succeeded in reaching Baden Baden without my arrival becoming known at least to Herbert and his paramour. But I now began to feel somewhat uneasy, for I at once came to the conclusion that that woman was talking about me. Her face was beautiful; a real blonde with splendid hair of that indescribable light color that seems a combination of pure gold and flaxen. Yet that lovely countenance was stamped with the impress of the Evil One himself. Cruelty, cunning, passion and every bad inclination was written on each lineament.

“‘Mrs. Darnelle,’ said Lena, ‘I will go and watch these wretches. They have found out you are here, and I would wager my existence that Ann Rivel is plotting some mischief against you. That’s not Mr. Darnelle though.’”

“Lena was gone on her errand ere I could oppose her. She returned in about half an hour; and informed me that just before the two had reached their hotel they had separated. Indistinctly she heard Ann say something about the right time not come yet, that Herbert must be attended to by herself, and then the officers sent on the wrong scent. Thus they parted, and then the man, after a short walk, turned back and came directly to the hotel we occupied. Here he entered into conversation with several attachés of the house; and was evidently making inquiries of them concerning some one.

“‘There’s some wickedness abrewing, Mrs. Darnelle, you may depend.’ concluded Lena.

“I agreed with Lena on this point, and also on another, namely, that it would be advisable to change our quarters as soon as practicable. This

was done on the following day, though in making the change I took care to still keep near enough for my purpose, to Herbert's hotel.

"As you are perhaps aware, Baden Baden is the great gambling hell of Europe; and as the necessity of the case demanded it; I of course visited the most fashionable Rouge et Noir palace in the place, though so disguised that no one would have known me at all.

"One night as I promenaded the Saloon, a man entered suddenly, in apparent excitement. *It was Herbert Darnelle!* I could not describe my emotion at the sight of that man, whom I had so idolized; but who had torn my arms from about him and cast me off like a withered, worthless thing; and all for a woman who did not, could not love him as I had done. Instinctively I followed him as he strode to the gaming table. He threw down a gold piece; there was no one at hand to make a game with him, and with a gay but hollow laugh he challenged me, little dreaming who he spoke to. I know not why I did so, but I instantly accepted the challenge and covered his gold piece. On and on went the game with varying success, each of us becoming more intensely interested. Finally my fortune continued in one uninterrupted good channel until I had won over twenty thousand dollars from him. At this stage of the play his face began to look wild and haggard, and throwing down his last Louis d'or, he exclaimed:

"'You must be the demon disguised! There is my last piece. Make your game!'

"It is made; said I coldly as I won, and took the golden coin. Have you nothing else to stake?"

"'No! terrible charmer, nothing but my honor——.'

"'Which is valuelless!' I exclaimed interrupting him.

"'And my daughter——' he concluded, laughing.

"'Against whom, said I, in an excited voice I will shake every piece of the twenty thousand I have won from you. Come, sir, will you? If so, make your game!'

"My breath came quick and short, and unconsciously I grasped his arm. He seemed suddenly to become equally excited by my proposition, and replied, in bated tones:

"'And if you win, will you swear to rear her properly—for she is very young, and very dear to me? Her mother was the only woman I ever truly loved. In a fell moment, like a craven I cast her off for another who has deceived me constantly, who has ruined me! You look good. Swear this to me, and I play the precious stake.'

"'I swear!' answered I, like some one in a dream.

"The game was made—I won. I forgot myself and cried out:

"'Bring me my darling! my little Eloise!'

"'What! exclaimed Herbert, you know her name? Ah—who are you? You are——'

"'Eloise De Launey!' I exclaimed, removing my disguise. 'Here I

claim my child! I have won her fairly; and God knows the weary, weary leagues I have come to rescue my darling! Where is she? Take back your gold! I wish it not; but Eloise I must and will have!"

"Herbert started back like one appalled by some frightful apparition, his eyes distended and his month wide open.

"You! Eloise!" was all he said, and that too in a low choking voice.

"No time had I to reply, for at this moment between Herbert and me stepped Ann Rivel and the strange man whom I had seen walking with her. The next instant I was feeling for my poignard, but the officers about the saloon hurried Herbert and Ann, together with the strange man, out while they detained me arguing with me and endeavoring to appease my rage. They gathered my money—which I had won from Herbert—all up and made it into convenient rolls for me and then gave it to me and advised me to go home. All this was done in the coolest and most polite manner; for these men were accustomed to such scenes, and even far more tragic ones, every day.

"Presently I became calmer and reasoning with myself, I resolved to take the money back to Herbert, return it to him and appeal to his former love for me to give me back our child. With this resolution I returned to my hotel where I found Lena awaiting me and wondering anxiously why I remained so long absent. As Lena was continually of so great assistance to me, and so faithful, I invariably made it a rule to impart to her everything that occurred. So I detailed the events that had transpired just as fully as—in fact more so—than I have to yourself. My excitement was so intense that during the course of the night I was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill, requiring the instant aid of a physician.

"Nearly a week elapsed before I was able to go out. The first visit made, however, was to the hotel at which Herbert put up. I carried the money I won from him back, but what was my dismay to ascertain that Herbert and Ann Rivel had been gone from the hotel—no one knew whither. I now felt like a mariner, who after obtaining a glimpse of the pole star through a stormy sky, suddenly loses sight of it just when he most requires its light.

A TRAGEDY AND ITS PLOT.

"I had scarcely returned to my hotel when a knock came to my door. Lena was not there and I opened it myself. Two officers at once entered, asked me my name, hearing which they produced a warrant of arrest for the murder of Herbert Darnelle.

"Lena! Lena!" called I.

"She is also under arrest, Madame," said the officer.

"I was perfectly astounded; struck down as by a clap of thunder from a serene sky. I knew that it would be only wasting time to talk to the officers or ask any explanation or information of them. And therefore I only requested them to allow me a few minutes to arrange some little matters about my apartments. This they acceded to with much delicate politeness, and when I had finished I accompanied them to prison. Had my misfortune been less I would doubtless have suffered more keenly than I did; but it was so enormous, that at first, at least, it mercifully crushed my feeling. Yet this was only for awhile; for, as my mind began to recover from the shock, and to comprehend fully the appalling position in which I stood, my anguish and apprehension burst their bonds, like an accumulated torrent finally breaks through its dam, and sweeps resistlessly over the smiling fields beyond, utterly desolating them.

"I did not remain many days in prison, before I was arraigned and put on trial for my life. By permission of the Court I was allowed an advocate to conduct my defense.

"The first witness examined was a peasant or wood chopper. He stated that one evening—giving the date—he and a fellow laborer had been on their way home from work and that as they passed through a certain clump of trees close by a ruined cottage—which cottage had not been occupied for many years as it was said to be haunted—they saw by the light of the setting sun the body of a gentleman lying dead on the ground, with a red-coral handled dagger driven into his heart. And that a piece of paper with two lines of writing on it was fastened to his breast by the blade passing directly through it. Neither he nor his comrade could make out the writing as it was made with characters they could not understand.

"On discovering the corpse they had immediately run back to where they could find two other friends who had been working with them and got them to return to the spot with them. Then all four had gone to a magistrate and told of the discovery. Officers were at once despatched with the men to investigate the murder; and found everything just as had been narrated. The body had then been carried into the ruined cottage and laid upon a rough wooden bench. Throwing the dead man's mantle over his body they had all left until the next morning when they had again returned with the Burghmaster or Coroner. The only sign of life they found was a large beautiful black bird that, perched on the window sill, was singing cheerily.

"The murdered man was removed to the police office; where the dagger was drawn out of his heart and marked, together with the piece of paper on which was written in the English language the words—

Still Incomplete! Now then for her!

"The next witnesses called successively were the peasant's three com-

panions who fully corroborated his statements. Then followed the magistrate and Coroner. This closed the first stage of the testimony. The next step in the prosecution was to connect me with the commission of the hideous crime. For this purpose two witnesses were called; the first of whom was Lena Graef. Poor girl: as she came in, her face was ashy pale, and when she saw me she burst into tears and shook her head. Very reluctantly, in reply to questions put to her, she gave the following evidence.

"That she had acknowledged when first arrested herself, and while as she explained, under much excitement, that I, her mistress; had come from America to Europe with the express purpose of taking vengeance on Herbert Darnelle and Ann Rivel; also for the purpose of taking away from them my child, Eloise. When shown the slip of paper, taken from the body, she could not but admit that the writing was exactly like mine; though she did not believe I wrote it. Also that she recollected having seen the identical red-coral handled dagger in my possession in New Orleans, before we sailed for Europe—though she had heard me remark that I had lost it. She was then shown the slip of paper a second time and recognized it as being the same kind of paper that I always used, which was corroborated by an officer producing several quires from my desk, and comparing them with the slip. But, announced the prosecution, they would now produce the main witness, who would complete the links in the terrible chain that connected me with the murder. The witness was called; and who should it be but *Ann Rivel*! leaning on the arm of the tall, villainous man I had seen with her twice before. She feigned to be overwhelmed with grief, and was dressed in the deepest mourning.

"She testified that I had on a certain evening, in company with Dr. Lisle—so she called the villain who escorted her—visited a gambling saloon where she found, that, having been playing with me, Mr. Darnelle had lost his last coin; that he was in despair, and had it not been for her timely arrival, he would have committed suicide in the saloon. That she had persuaded him to come home with her, and the Doctor, and that after arriving there, he had confessed to her privately, that, after leaving his money, he had staked his little daughter Eloise against the sums he had already lost—that he had lost the game, and was to meet the prisoner—myself—near the spot where his body had been found, and where he was to deliver up the child to her. She, Ann Rivel had endeavored to persuade him not to do anything of the sort, and he had solemnly promised her that he would not.

"Instead of keeping this promise, he had taken his daughter away on the day appointed, and the next known of him was the finding of his corpse in the manner already described. The child was gone, nor could any trace be found of her, though the most strenuous exertions had been

made for that purpose. She wound up her evidence by passionately appealing to me, to at least to restore to her arms her dear daughter, Eloise.

"The heartless piece of acting threw me into a fury; and in spite of judges and the rest, I poured forth a withering invective giving my whole history from the beginning down to the present moment.

"*'Madame,'* said my advocate, when I sank to my seat with exhaustion. I am sorry for you, but I can do nothing now. You have ruined your case.

"*'So be it, then!'* I exclaimed, *'I appeal to Heaven! I am innocent! I am innocent!'*

"The officers of the Saloon were examined finally to support part of the evidence of Ann Rivel, and then the case closed, and the verdict was being awaited, when suddenly the whole aspect of affairs was altered by the re-appearance of Lena Graef; who, rushing into the room, flung herself at the feet of the judge, exclaiming that she alone was guilty of the murder. She had been induced to commit the deed by her zeal to serve me, whom she knew to be so deeply wronged by Mr. Darnelle. Still the judge averred that none but the hand of a deeply injured wife could ever have inflicted such vengeance on a false husband.

"The most astounded persons in Court by this unexpected occurrence were Ann Rivel and *Doctor Lisle*, a circumstance that caused me to think strangely. However I had not recovered from my surprise before I heard the verdict of *'NOT GUILTY'* rendered to me. This freed me; but, alas! poor faithful Lena was now a prisoner in my place, and I was not allowed to even speak to her before she was hurried away!

"Heavy hearted I returned to my hotel to spend the succeeding two days in studying over some means of relieving Lena from her frightful situation. I was firmly convinced of two things: first that Lena was entirely innocent of any crime whatever, and second that either Ann Rivel, or Dr. Lisle; or both of them had murdered Herbert Darnelle. So strongly was I convinced of this that I went to the magistrate and told him of my convictions. He said that he was convinced of the same fact, and had been ever since he had seen Ann Rivel's manner in court. And he promised to aid me in any way in his power. Besides having Lena's trial postponed, he would see that Ann Rivel and the Doctor were placed under police surveillance.

"The following morning I received word from the prison that during the night Lena the prisoner had died suddenly, from the effects of poison, which it was supposed, had been administered to her in a cake that some stranger had taken to the gate and left for her, representing that she was a great friend of hers.

"*'That is some more of Ann Rivel's hellish work!'* said I to myself, and I at once determined to bring it home to her if I could. When the police went to ascertain something about Ann Rivel and her paramour,

they found that both had just sailed in a vessel bound to Australia; and alas! that they had a little girl with them. As there was no charge against them or sufficient foundation for one, the vessel could not be detained at any port. Thus these wretches, with the blood of two human beings on their hands had escaped.

"When I heard it, I once more resolved on a journey of vengeance; this time to avenge my child Eloise, poor faithful Lena, and Herbert, whom I had already forgiven for what he had done to me. He had told me that he really loved me alone; and this in my eyes covered his sin with a mantle of charity that I would not draw aside. My first duty was to see that Herbert and Lena were properly interred and suitable monuments erected above their resting places. This done, I set sail for that wild and far-off land, Australia, hoping to overtake the murderers and rescue Eloise from their clutches.

PARTIAL VENGEANCE.

"After a prosperous voyage I landed at Melbourne; and at once entered upon the chase with all the ardor of my ardent nature. It was but a short time before I had a clue to the whereabouts of the detestable pair. They had gone up along the coast toward Cape Howe. Thither I went as fast as possible, and finally was rewarded by learning that Doctor Lisle would most likely pass a hamlet in the mountains before dark, that I would reach in the afternoon. Ann Rivel had gone on a day or two earlier by another route to Cape Howe.

"Before proceeding, I would say that when I landed in Australia, and found out the roughness of the country and its inhabitants, I donned the apparel of a man, and travelled with a rifle slung at my back, and a pair of pistols and a knife stuck in my belt.

"By an extra effort I got to the hamlet at noon; and ascertained that the Doctor had not reached there yet! From the direction he was coming I knew the exact road he must take. For a short distance this road ran along on the ledge of a precipice where there was not more than room enough for one person to ride along at a time. Close by this place and in the face of the precipice above the way were several deep fissures. In one of these I took my position to await the appearance of my intended victim.

"The sun set, but was immediately replaced by the moon, which in Australia is almost as bright, and soon after I saw two horsemen coming along the precipitous ledge. The first was a stranger, the other was Doctor Lisle. I drew a pistol, examined the cap, and calmly waited till the doomed and guilty wretch was directly opposite to me—so close in-

deed that I could almost touch him with my hand. The other man had passed without seeing me. There was a report, a groaning scream, and the next moment man and horse went over the cliff into the abyss below. The Doctor's companion never stopped even to look behind him; but hurried on, doubtless praying that no one would shoot at *him*.

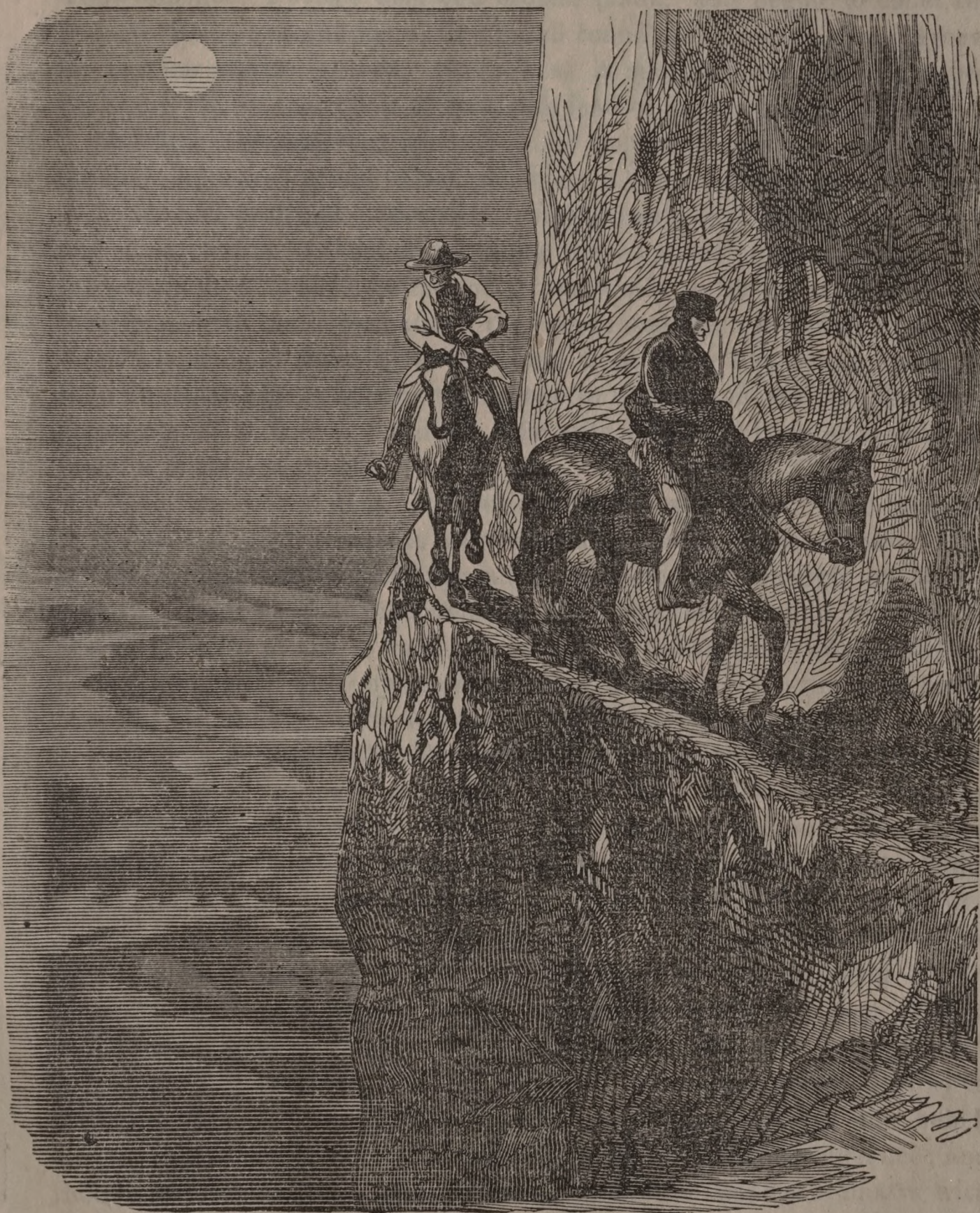
"Now then for *her*!" said I to myself, repeating the words that Ann Rivel had written on the paper, which she and her vile paramour had pinned with my dagger to the breast of poor, dead Herbert; to cast suspicion on me as his murderess. I returned to the hamlet without being detected, although there was a great commotion concerning the mysterious deed. I had not the slightest compunction about the act; for I considered it one proper in every respect to do.

"My next step was to push on to Cape Howe; but, upon arriving there, I found that Ann Rivel had left there two days previously to return to Melbourne. Back to Melbourne I hastened, only to find, however, that my intended prey had set sail but a few hours before my arrival. I now became convinced that Ann Rivel, by some means or other, had learned of my pursuit of her, and would use her best endeavors to throw me off the trail. I knew her also to be a deep, cunning, and most wickedly unscrupulous woman. Yet never for an instant did my determination falter. A ship was not to start for England for two weeks yet, and as you may suppose I chafed during this delay like a chained tiger. But at last I was on the ocean on my way to avenge my wrongs and the wrongs of Herbert Darnelle and his and my Eloise.

"We had a rapid and prosperous voyage till we neared the island of Sumatra, when suddenly there sprung up a most fearful storm. We had a noble ship, a good Captain and an excellent crew; and, for a long time, our Clipper rode the tempest in splendid style. But finally the sea became so violent as to strain her timbers badly, and she sprung aleak. At once the pumps were manned, and every effect was made to clear the hold; all to no effect, however. Our situation was now desperate; our masts had all gone overboard, the water was gaining every moment, and we knew we were driving toward the shore.

"At midnight the captain ordered distress signals to be made. Red rockets went screeching through the darkness, followed by the lurid flash and dull roar of the minute gun. Rocket and gun, however, were alike helpless to bring us aid, and toward morning the captain announced that all had been done that could be, and we must now trust to God.

"Then followed a frightful scene; and one that it would be impossible for me to describe. Amid the screams, groans and weeping of the passengers burst upon us the horrible roar of the breakers ahead. The scene was soon closed by our ship dashing furiously on the rocks; where, in a very short time, she went to pieces, leaving everybody struggling in the angry embrace of the billows. By the light of day, that was just dawning, I could see several natives on the beach, watching us.



In the moonlight I saw the two horsemen coming along the narrow ledge of the precipice, and I made ready for them.

"I had resolved to go down the moment I should be thrown into the water, and thus end my sufferings quickly. But when I *was* in the sea, I seemed to suddenly become animated with a strong desire to live. Thus impelled, I seized hold of a broken plank, and began to buffet the waves with might and main; though all round me strong men sank groaning to their watery graves. Strange as it may seem to you, I reached the shore the sole survivor of that ship load of human beings.

"At first the natives, who had now increased to several hundred in number, appeared afraid of me, deeming me as charmed to thus escape when all had perished. Yet they took good care that I did not go away; and some twenty of them surrounding me as a sort of guard of honor I suppose, two of them bore me more than a mile to the palace of the King, to whom, with many formalities they presented me. I remained in the King's household about a week; being kept more like a state prisoner than anything else, and was then made to understand that the King had given me as a wife to Faralang, a favorite officer of his, in acknowledgement of faithful services.

"There was no escape; and I was obliged to submit. I was married to the bronze-faced Faralang, a noble looking man, who soon proved himself the fondest and best of husbands. My pale face, though at first a curiosity, soon became distasteful to Faralang, and also to his friends, and in order to please at least him; I sought the services of an old Doctor on the island, who, by the application of some mysterious unguent, changed my complexion to what you now behold it, a deep, golden bronze.

"A very short time after this, Faralang, while out hunting tigers, was injured fatally; though he lingered nearly three weeks after receiving the hurts. I attended him faithfully during his illness, and as a fitting manifestation of his love he ordered, that, with the consent of the King, I should be allowed to leave the island and go abroad in search of my enemy, Ann Rivel—only exacting the promise on my part that I would return to Sumatra as soon as possible. This I of course acceded to; for there, in that lovely clime, I learned to love the noblest and best of men. Not, though, with that fervid and imperishable intensity with which I had idolized Herbert! Ah, no! for Herbert's memory was laid away in my heart of hearts, never to be effaced by anything else. On his behalf and on that of his child, had I set forth on my mission of vengeance; and though my shipwreck and subsequent stay on the island of Sumatra with the events following, had hindered the fulfilment of my vow, they did not destroy it; but on the contrary, made it more binding on me by very reason of the delay. Now, therefore, that I was free, I felt like the freshly unleashed hound, and once more started on the chase for justice and vengeance.

"Of course, after the length of time that had passed since I first sailed for England from Australia, all trace was lost of Ann Rivel. But hope

was as buoyant as ever within me, and in the first vessel that touched at Sumatra I set out for England attended by four female servants and two men servants—those who are now with me. Fortune favored me, and within three weeks after I landed, I succeeded in finding out that my enemy; or at least a woman answering her description, with a little girl had about the time corresponding with that at which she should have arrived in England, gone directly to an obscure village, Alnwyck, Northumberland County. She had acted strangely, as though in dread of being pursued.

“‘Heaven grant that I may find her!’ I prayed as I took the first train for Alnwyck. Though I invariably rode in the fastest trains, I seemed to move far too slowly. At length my destination was reached, however, and with eager expectations I questioned the landlady of the Red Lion Inn, a short, rubicund old dame, who was like a chronicle with all the events that had transpired in Alnwyck for the past forty years stored away in her memory.

“‘La bless your ‘ighness,’ said she, when I inquired about the stranger, ‘didn’t she come ‘ere to the Red Lion, as the h’only respectable h’establishment—h’entertainment fur man and beast—an’ didn’t she call me h’up into ‘er room, and caution me that if a tall, dark lady ‘appened to h’arrive in Alnwyck, and enquire for a blue-eyes, light-‘aired lady—which wuz ‘erself—and a black-eyes, black-‘aired little girl—which wuz the child as she ‘ad with ‘er, I wuz to keep mum? An’ didn’t she slip seven suv’rins into my ‘and, an’ say: ‘Now, Mrs. Lester, that’s in advance; you’ll be careful will you? ‘An’ didn’t I, seein’ the wicked leer she give me—though she wuz as pretty as a rose—h’assert my British dignity, an’ tell ‘er that bribery an’ currupshun might be werry well for them Parliament men but not for me. An’ didn’t she clear ‘erself h,out three days after without sayin’ a word. An’ didn’t I ‘ave my misgivin’s h’about ‘er; that she wuz a wretch an’ wuz a runnin’ h’off with sum ‘un h’elses child? which ‘aving done, h’I took good care that my man, Toby, who wuz a goin’ down to Lunnun, should follow ‘er, an’ just see where she went to, in Lunnun; fur I knowd she’d go straight down to Lunnun; because h’all them kind o’folk’s sure to go to Lunnun, you know, your ‘ighness’.

“‘Where did she go then?’ I exclaimed.

“‘She go’d straight to the Dover Rail’ud h’office, your ‘ighness, an’ there she got a ticket clear across to Calais on the French Coast.’

“‘And there’ said I, ‘your man, Toby, lost all further traces of her.’

“‘La, yis, your ‘ighness! h’of course, Toby—who ‘ates France as bad as water in ‘is beer—couldn’t go h’after ‘er h’any further.’

“I immediately ended my conversation with the honest old dame, and paying her bill liberally, I received her sincere blessing, as, one hour later I bade the Red Lion adieu. As fast as steam could carry me I was in

Paris. Upon dilligent inquiries I found that, after landing at Calais, Ann Rivel had made her way to an isolated hamlet or village in the middle of the province of Burgundy. Thither I wended my way, though much more slowly than hitherto; as I was obliged to leave the regular road after reaching the borders of the province. Such was the shrewdness of the wicked woman of whom I was in pursuit that I was in constant dread she would, by some means or other, ascertain my approach, notwithstanding the alteration of my appearance. Thus taking every precaution against discovery, I advanced till the peaked roofs of the cottages of Allané came in sight. It was a lovely spot as I saw it there nestled down in a little vale and covered with the deep shadows of the mountains that stood like a rugged wall between Allané and the setting sun.

"By the time I descended the mountain side it was evening in the hamlet. Still I found no difficulty in reaching the humble tavern of the place, where the landlord and his whole family nearly set me beside myself with their attentions.

"This was invariably the danger I encountered in these inland towns and villages; where the arrival of a stranger, most especially of one coming from a large city like London or Paris, is instantly heralded not only throughout the village, but, I might truly say, for miles around it. I endeavored to obviate the danger attending this fact on my reaching Allané. I summoned the host and announcing to him that I had business of importance in Allané and wished to ask him a few questions alone, and must be insured that our conversation would not be overheard. This, with all the grimaces of a monkey, he promised should be exactly as accorded with my wishes.

"I then carefully questioned him concerning the arrival of Ann Rivel in Allané. At first he pleaded utter ignorance of any such event; but when I began to refresh his memory a little, and he found that I was in terrible earnest, he suddenly remembered all about it.

"'Where does this woman live now?' asked I.

"'Up on a gentle slope of the mountain as you go out to the little chapel, Madame,' he replied, about a quarter of a mile to the Southward of this village.'

"'Does she ever travel away from this place?' I inquired further.

"'Not often, Madame. Once in a long time she may do so.'

"I then minutely questioned my obsequious host as to the approach to the house, and other important points. Having ascertained all I desired to know, I gave my informant a Louis d'or, with the remark that he should be still better rewarded, provided no one, either in the village, or in his own house, learned of what we had been conversing. He swore, by all the Saints in the Calendar, that our conversation should be kept perfectly sacred.

"The following morning I mounted a pony of my host's and rode casu-

ally in the direction of the cottage. Oh, how my heart throbbed, as I neared the spot. *'Now then for her!'* I once more said to myself; and the dreadful past came flitting before my eyes with its every scene and event distinctly pictured; and yet it came and went as might a flash of lightning.

"Presently, as I rose over a sharp, rocky ridge I beheld the cottage. But it seemed as though it were deserted; and I found it difficult to repress a pang of apprehension as I rode forward to its pretty porch. I was about to knock, when a peasant girl, who appeared to have been waiting for the purpose, approached from a neighboring cottage, and placed a sealed letter in my hand.

"My emotion was so strong that I could hardly open the missive. I did so, however, and read:

"ELOISE DE LAUNEY:

"It is useless for you to pursue me. You can never overtake me. I know your purpose, and I should know you through any disguise. I learned of your coming two days ago, and while you have been hastening hither, I have been moving with equal rapidity in the opposite direction. Eloise and I will give you a long chase of it. Really I, myself, am beginning to enjoy it very much as the only excitement of my life. You have your match. Some day, if we ever meet face to face, I will explain something to you of which you are now ignorant. Till then, Adieu: ANN RIVEL.

"I could have sunk into the earth with vexation at being thus baffled. Yet on somewhat recovering my equanimity, I felt more determined than ever I did before to hunt down this wicked creature, and let her feel the weight of an injured woman's vengeance.

"But since then I have never yet been able to find a single trace of her, though I have spared neither money nor pains to obtain one. Yet I still hope! hope? ah, yes! the only hope that keeps me alive is, that some day I may yet find my darling child! my Eloise!"

The CORAL LADY, thus ending her narrative, took up her *guzla*, and sang, like one in a dream, the same sweet, touching sorrowful melodies as before. She seemed then to become extremely despondent, and as it was getting late, I rose to take my departure; thanking her for her confidence in narrating to me her life, and asking her if she had any objection to my publishing it when I should return home to America. She assured me she had not, if such was my pleasure. She also informed me, that, as the performance of a vow would prevent her holding any communication with any one for a week to come, and as I was to sail for home two days hence, we would perhaps never meet again. "But," said she: "if I ever find Eloise, I will write to you, for that alone will complete my narrative."

We parted, after my lovely and eccentric hostess had pressed upon me several costly presents; she to continue her search for her little Eloise, and I to wonder—as I have no doubt the reader will do—at the singular and romantic History of this strangest of women—THE CORAL LADY.



This is the only likeniss ever published of the mysterious Coral Lady ; and was engraved from an Ivory Miniature obtained by Mrs. Southworth, the authoress.

THE LOST TRAIL FOUND.

TO THE PUBLISHER.

Dear Sir:

You will recollect that, when I placed in your hands the narrative of *The Mysterious Coral Lady*, I told you of her promise to write to me if she ever found her little daughter, Eloise; whom she evidently idolized. I never expected to hear of her again; but what was my astonishment to receive only yesterday a packet post-marked Paris. It was thick, and sealed with a seal having the design of a sprig of red coral.

As I cut open the envelope with my scissors, I was consumed with excited emotions, and ere I took out the tripple folded sheets of writing, I asked myself fifty questions; for I well knew who the manuscript came from. I might fill many quires of paper telling you all about the contents of the packet. But as it would not be half as good—after all my efforts—as the narrative itself, I have made a strict and correct copy thereof, and forward it to you to add to the new edition of *The Coral Lady Book*. It is far more powerful than any previous portion of the narrative, and completes the latter.

Yours Respectfully:

THE AUTHORESS.

MY DEAR FRIEND, MRS. SOUTHWORTH:

When You and I parted from each other in Paris, I thought that I should not only never see your kindly face again in this life; but also that most likely I should never have the opportunity of writing to you as I had promised, for I felt nearly certain at that time that Fate had decreed me non-success in my pursuit of Ann Rivel. But for once the Goddess relented, and one of the results is that I am now penning this to you; and the other you will ascertain on reading what I send you

Affectionately Yours:

ELOISE DE LAUNEY.

As you are already aware, when I conversed with you in Paris I had lost all trace for some time of Ann Rivel, the vile creature who had ruined my happiness for all time to come. Throughout the whole city of Paris high and low, in all kinds of neighborhoods I sent detectives, and often went myself in disguise with the object of obtaining some clue that might

lead to the detection of the whereabouts of my intended victim. Yet, day after day, and night after night, the same result was always reached, and the same monotonous reports made—

“Nothing yet! nothing yet!”

One night about one o'clock I was awakened suddenly as by the presence of some one close by my couch. I knew such a thing was impossible for I was surrounded by screens, and my servants would no more think of intruding upon my privacy, without being summoned by me, than they would of ascending to the moon; for they knew that I always kept a loaded pistol ready for instant use.

For sometime I laid awake oppressed with that singular sensation of some one being close to me and yet seeing no one, and finally so disagreeable did this become, that I was obliged to get up. I walked about and read and then played and sang, and thinking I had dissipated the sensation. I once more threw myself on my couch and soon fell asleep. Again, however, I was once more aroused in the same mysterious manner. And as I opened my eyes the dim shadow of Herbert Darnelle flitted past me and was gone, as all shadows go. It did not look at me; it did not speak to me; it merely passed by, and was no doubt an impression of the mind; for I had, just previously to going asleep the second time, been thinking about him.

Suddenly the thought suggested itself to me to go back to the hamlet of Allané in Burgundy, and there I would hear of Ann Rivel. This thought seemed to me to be in some way connected with that vague shadow, that bodiless form of Herbert Darnelle, which had come and gone as the light cloud flies swiftly across the face of the sun. This I argued to myself was another of those impressions made by the mind on itself, and which, had I been more sensitive, I should have ascribed to supernatural causes. Still, nevertheless, the impression remained; nay; it grew stronger and stronger. Finally, such a hold did it take on me that I resolved to go back to Allané. I argued to myself that, perhaps during the second visit I might find some means of learning something that I had missed during the previous visit. No sooner did I come to this resolution than I was on my way to the romantic hamlet among the mountains of Burgundy, Allané.

Instead of travelling this time as I had done before; namely, by railroad, I hired relays of light, swift coaches, each drawn by four splendid horses. My orders were to place me in Allané as quickly as it could be done; and if fifty horses were killed, I would pay for them.

The result was that I reached my destination almost as speedily as by steam, and without the possibility of any person anticipating my arrival. The host of the little inn at Allané was thunder struck at seeing me again; for he had supposed I would never return. I had not intended to stop at his inn, but to go straight to the cottage which had been inhabited by

Ann Rivel. But as it turned out, I was obliged to pass the inn on my road, and of course you, as a traveler, will understand the utter impossibility of passing a country inn without being seen by the omni-present landlord, and landlady, and all the rest about the establishment.

Out flew Monsieur Fallon, his wife, children and servants. I was completely surrounded and so pplied with congratulations and requests to come in and take full possession of the inn, that I was forced to surrender at last.

"Madame," said Monsieur, as he escorted me to the best chamber his domicile afforded; "I have something to impart to you, privately."

I was at once eager to listen, and after closing the door Monsieur Fallon began:

"Madame; do you not remember, last time you were here, that the person you were in pursuit of, Ann Rivel, made her flight just before you went to her cottage?"

"Yes I do, Monsieur Fallon, very distinctly. What news have you of her? Any? Has she returned? Is she still there? Has she the little girl with her yet?"

These interrogatives I put to Monsieur Fallon with I suppose rather bewildering rapidity; for, passing his hand several times over his forehead, he begged that I would let him answer one at a time.

"Tell me all; and do it quickly!" was my rejoinder; at which the fussey little host began:

"You had been left Allané about a fortnight only; when, one morning by a little after sunrise, we beheld Madame Rivel coming along the road——"

"Had she the girl with her?" I interrupted, laying my hand on Monsieur Fallon's arm.

"No, Madame, she had not."

"Alas!" I cried, "poor little Eloise! She was the one I really wanted! I am her mother! But, proceed! proceed!"

"Of course," resumed my host, "we were all much surprised to behold Madame Rivel come back; and still more so when she announced to us that she had returned to stay. Two days after that she went away again, and again returned, this time bringing the little girl with her——"

"Oh, thank God! then both are still here!" exclaimed I, again interrupting Monsieur Fallon.

"I do not think they are, Madame. In fact I know they are not. For only yesterday Madame Rivel, after all her assurances that she intended to remain here permanently, suddenly took her departure. The little girl was with her, and she never stopped but went away as fast as she could."

"Did she say whither she was going?" asked I.

"No, Madame; but, as I saw her leaving with so much precipitation, it occurred to me that most likely you were approaching our little village

in pursuit of her again. I had cause to remember you gratefully, and I sent Jacques, my son, to follow Madame Rivel for two or three days, supplying him with money for all his expenses."

"Oh! thanks! thanks, my shrewd friend!" I exclaimed; "both your son and yourself shall be amply remunerated! He has not returned I suppose?"

"Not yet, Madame. He will not be back for two days, unless circumstances induce him to alter the plan I laid out for him. And I assure you, Madame, Jacques is no fool; and if Madame Rivel misleads him I will give her full credit."

I was obliged to remain at Allané and await the return of Jacques Fallon with what good or ill news he might have to bring me. That day passed drearily enough, though all was bright and serene in the little valley. In the same manner passed the succeeding day. And the third one bade fair to be like the other two. You could not imagine my anxiety and distress as I sat by my chamber window, watching the path by which Jacques must come, as it wound its zigzaz way up the mountain's side. My eyes ached with gazing, and the shadows cast by the setting sun began to be deep and sombre over the vale of Allané. Still Jacques was unheard from. The sombre shadows became blended and deepened into one dark mantle, wrapping hamlet, mountain and forest in night; and my aching eyes suffused with tears. There was a hope and a fear connected with Jacques thus overstaying the allotted time. The hope was, that, having got fairly on the track of Ann Rivel, and it continuing with promise of near success, he had kept on. The fear was, that, finding herself thus watched, the shrewd, wicked woman had drawn the lad into some bye way and perhaps silenced him forever, as she had once before silenced one far dearer to me than life—poor Herbert Darnelle.

I mentioned my suspicions to Monsieur Fallon; but, with a shrug of the shoulders, and a meaning twinkle of his grey eyes, he said:

"Ah! Madame does Jacques injustice! Jacques will give a good account of himself! and I think his delay bodes good fortune!—Ha! ha! there is his horn now! The Marsellaise! ha! ha! Madame! I told Jacques to give us the Marsellaise as he crossed the mountain's crest, if he had good success. Good news, Madame! Jacques is no fool! Hark don't you hear it?—there! now comes in the chorus!"

The window was open; but I heard nothing. Mine were unexperienced ears. I looked up where I knew the path must wind, and I saw through the night a spark of fire that moved like a star swinging back and forth.

Monsieur Fallon looked also, and exclaimed in his ecstasy:

"Hurrah! Madame! that's Jacques, swinging his lantern! That's a signal I told him to make in case the wind carried the sound of his horn away from our direction!"

At this moment the sweet and powerful notes of Jacques' French horn came down to my ears on the evening wind. The Marsellaise ! Great Heaven ! never had I heard that tumultuously thrilling melody under such exciting circumstances. My whole being trembled with excitement. I could hardly control myself. I strained my head as far as possible out of the window with eye and ear intent. And once, I remember, shaking Monsieur Fallon to induce him to remain quiet about the merits of Jacques.

Nearer and nearer came that swinging lantern of Jacques, and clearer and clearer became the notes of his well played horn, till finally the stalwart lad, covered with dust, stood before me in my chamber ; while his father capered and pranced around him like one out of his senses.

In a plain, straightforward manner, and with a peasant's simplicity, Jacques narrated to myself and his father his adventures since the chase on which his father had sent him, commenced. He had traced Ann Rivel from town to town, until reaching Besançon, he had ascertained that she intended, after remaining there a short time, to go to Berne, in Switzerland, where she had several years previous purchased a cottage. He had evidently displayed much acuteness in his pursuit, nor did he quit it until he thought it safe to do so. The information he brought me was most valuable ; and I not only thanked him ; but gave him such a reward as made him stare with surprise. Nor did I forget his father who had so shrewdly sent his son Jacques on the pursuit, on the supposition that I would appear in Allané immediately after Ann Rivel left it.

AGAIN IN PURSUIT.

The next morning by sun-rise I was far up the mountain side, making my way to Besançon with all possible speed, and praying with all possible fervor that Ann Rivel might not resume her journey until she and I had met face to face. I had not travelled far before an accident happened which came near ending my life. I was riding a mule that I had hired with a guide to take me across the mountains. We had come to a dangerous path on the mountain side, and a heavy rain having fallen, made it extremely slippery. The animal I rode had never performed the journey before, and consequently was not to be depended on. This I was in ignorance of, until we were approaching the dangerous place to which I have just referred ; when my guide cautioned me to look out for any slipping or faltering of the animal, and instructed me what to do in the occurrence of such an event. At any other time I should have promptly turned back ; but not now. No ! not if Satan himself had stood in my

pathway would I have taken one retrograde step. On we kept, and sure enough, when the animal I rode got to the dangerous portion of the route he began to lose confidence in himself, exactly as a human being might do.

The further the brute advanced the more frightened did he become, and about the middle of a path that led through a dismal gorge, he lost his footing and slid down a steep declivity nearly a hundred and fifty feet. Here he caught on a ridge or narrow ledge, about six inches in width, which arrested his progress down the rest of the incline at least five hundred feet more.

Jean, the guide, stopped his mule; and uncoiling a long, strong cord—that guides carry for just such accidents—he was preparing to throw it to me, when suddenly, from some unexplained cause, the brute I rode began to rear and plunge. On a level plain this would have been sufficiently dangerous to the rider; but midway down a mountain side, scarcely anything but a miracle could save any one. I thought of a desperate resource; and, drawing my poignard, I was in the very act of killing the beast. The point of the steel was aimed directly at the spinal cord, and another moment would have brought the mule down dead.

At this juncture, however, his hoof broke away a portion of the ridge, and, as he struggled to save himself, he pitched me off his back, and sent me whirling down the declivity like a shot. Death stared me in the face; but I did not lose my presence of mind. I clutched the poignard, and each time I rolled over, I tried to drive it into the ground. Twenty times at least did I make the effort before I succeeded. But finally I did succeed, and my headlong descent was stopped.

I glanced upward, and there beheld the mule, where he had stood; while at the top of the declivity I saw Jean, doing nothing more sensible than crossing himself and making other motions of despair. In fact it seemed to me as though he could not see me for some moments in spite of my repeated screams to attract his attention.

The mule was still plunging and slipping, and, as I was in a direct line below him, I began to tremble lest he should come rolling down upon me and crush me to death. To avoid this peril I crept carefully in an oblique direction to a place of safety; and again shouted to the guide.

By this time that worthy had somewhat regained his composure, and at once began to descend towards where I was. This was a matter of the greatest risk, even for such an experienced mountaineer as Jean. But finally after great exertion and one or two ugly slips, he got the cord to me. Then commenced the great struggle to reach the path from which I had originally been thrown. The very thought of that frightful ascent makes me tremble.

At last, through the favor of Providence, and with many a narrow es-

cape, Jean succeeded in assisting me to a firm footing once more on the path. So great was his fear at having been the cause of the accident, that he went down on his knees, begged my pardon, and prayed me that I would not ruin him by saying anything about the reason of the accident, pleading his wife, children, and aged parents, who were dependent on his profits as a guide for their living. Though very angry at the fellow, I forgave him, and the journey was at once resumed, Jean walking, and I riding on his mule, a thoroughly-safe and sure-footed animal, who, Jean averred, would carry me safe along a path though it be no wider than the back of a sword. Before starting again I insisted on Jean shooting the unfortunate mule that still stood far down the side of the mountain, as it would be impossible to save it, and cruel in the extreme to let it stand there till it starved. Besides, the poor brute, when it found us going, looked up, and uttered such a groaning sound of agony that it was extremely touching to hear.

The rest of the journey was accomplished without any event occurring that was worthy of being recorded and I arrived in Besancon full of hope and fear—hope that I might overtake the woman who had caused me such trouble and unhappiness, and fear that, as she had done previously, so now she might escape me. I felt rather meanly of myself, also, to think that she *could* escape from me always, and with so much apparent ease.

ARRIVAL IN BESANCON.

As I entered the lovely town of Besancon I met a peasant and his wife going to their work. I stopped them, and after some casual inquiries I asked:

"Can you tell me, whether any strange men have come into Besancon within the last two weeks?"

"Yes, Madame," replied the woman, "there have been three come in that time. Two of them were workmen looking for employment and the other was a gentleman who called himself a Nature man I think; and he was hunting up flowers and weeds and birds and bugs. The queerest thing I ever heard of."

"You mean, he called himself a Naturalist!"

"Oh, yes, Madame, that was it."

"I suppose there were no women with either of the three men," said I coming as gradually as possible to the point I wished to settle, and yet speaking in a half-indifferent tone of voice.

"No, Madame, there were not. Them kind of men I don't think would care much about lugging women about with them."

The woman laughed boisterously at what she thought was very ludicrous, and the man with a gaffaw, added :

"No, indeed, lady, when a man's after work he dont want no more load than his tools for a long tramp. And as to them Natural Chaps, why they're too crazy for anything but bugs and snails and herbs, and the likes."

I smiled at the simplicity of the two peasants ; but I had my object ; and, taking out my purse, I began to open it—thus taking Hamlet's advice to his actors—"to suit the action to the word, and the word to the action."

"Now," said I, taking a couple of small gold pieces between my finger and thumb and just making them peep out edgewise, "have there been any strange ladies come into your beautiful town within two or three weeks?"

"Yes, Madame, there has! exclaimed the woman as she rivited her gaze on the gold pieces, the sight of which together with the idea that they were intended for her made her breathe quick and short with excited longing. "yes Madame, there has. That is there's only been one that I know of."

"Can you describe her?" asked I.

"Do you mean, can I tell you what she looked like?"

"Yes."

"Oh, yes, I can do that; for anybody that once got sight of her wouldn't forget what she looked like. She was a little bit taller than you are, not quite so stout—though you are a nice size and not fat—"

"You mean, said I, helping the woman out, that she was rather thin."

"Yes, Madame, that's what I ment; but I couldn't get at it."

"Well, go on!" said I, as the woman paused to took greedily at the gold pieces.

"She was thin," she resumed, "and her face was pale, but just as beautiful as any painting. Her eyes were clear blue like a light sky in the morning, and the long lashes came down over them like fringes. She had splendid hair and eye brows."

"Do you know what she called herself?" I asked, keeping outwardly calm, though the tempest began to rage within me, for I felt this was Ann Rivel.

"No, Madame, I don't know what her name was; but I know what she called her little girl. It was Eloise, and a beautiful little thing she was. And ——"

The woman gave a start, and gazed at me as though she were struck by a sudden discovery. Then she finished her sentence with:

"Why she looked just like you; only she was not a gold color like your face is. You're that little girl's mother! are you not?"

Thus, with her woman's intuitive preception, this ignorant peasant de-

vined the true state of the case. I once read a story of a miner who was at work in a copper mine that extended under a lake. An immense mass of earth fell behind him and buried him in a living tomb from which no friendly hand could rescue him. After some hours he became almost mad with thirst, and knowing that but a thin crust of earth was between him and the water of the lake above, he desperately seized his pick axe, and began to bring down huge lumps of ore and earth in the double hope of slaking his thirst, and rising to the surface of waves and swimming ashore.

Presently the water began to trickle through; but scarcely had the poor man thanked Providence for this, before the angry deluge burst through with horrible noise and violence, and dashed him into a mangled corpse.

I felt much like that man for the discovery had burst in upon me from that poor peasant woman's mouth like the deluge which had destroyed him. I was completely nonplussed; but suddenly I thought: "Why not make a friend of this woman? She will serve me for gold if not for any other reason." With this resolution I again addressed her:

"Yes, I am that little girl's mother. That woman stole her from me and I am in pursuit of her. Perhaps you are a mother yourself. If you will help me to accomplish my object I will give you gold. Do you see it? I will give you more than you ever had in all your life."

"Madame," said the woman, "if it was only the gold, though Pierre and myself are wretchedly poor, I would tell you no. But as it would be in a good cause I will serve you any way I can, and so will Pierre here if you will pay us as much wages a day as we can now make at our work."

"How much is that?" I asked.

"Forty Sous, Madame."

(about 35 cents Editor.)

"Forty Sous!" exclaimed I, in astonishment at such a meagre sum, "yes I will give you each five francs a day."

"Ah! Heaven bless you, Lady!" ejaculated Pierre the husband, "why that will enable us to give both our son and daughter a handsome start in life."

"Serve me well and faithfully," replied I, and your son and daughter shall both have an outfit such as no peasant in the region ever had before.

The woman burst into tears of joy at this, and Pierre could not restrain himself from embracing his wife on the spot. Till that moment I never knew how happy one could be by making others happy. Upon further conversing, I learned that the woman, Christine, had been born and raised within a few miles of Berne, and had many friends and relatives there.

I now felt a sudden impression come on me that this time I would be successful; that the fugitive could no longer elude me; and that I would recover my child, Eloise. I at once engaged the two peasants, Christine and her husband, and turning back with me they entered the town of Besancon.

HUNTED DOWN AT LAST.

I now felt renewed vigor in the chase, and proceeded to lay my plans as a general might do who appreciated the difficulty of the coming battle, and yet was sure of victory. To avoid as much as possible any excitement that my arrival might make, I went directly to the cottage, or rather hut, of my peasant friends, where I found the son and daughter one twenty and the other seventeen. Bright, intelligent and handsome, their humble parents might well be proud of them; and when they were told my intentions toward them their happiness was indeed a happy sight to see. Father, mother and both children at once commenced the search for me, and within a few hours learned that the strange lady with the little girl had remained only one day in the town and had then departed for Berne in Switzerland.

This was what I had really expected to hear; and I was therefore prepared with my plan. I sent the Sachés, father, mother, son and daughter, instantly to Berne with instructions to ascertain the exact locality in which Ann Rivel had settled, and then to keep a strict watch on her movements until I arrived. The reason I did this was that each time before that I had gone directly to a place where she was, she had ascertained my approach by some means or other. But I had now found assistants on whom I felt I could depend, and so I remained in Besancon three days after their departure, in order to give them time to obtain the information desired. It was exceedingly trying to my patience thus to wait, but I controlled myself, and did not start for Berne until the day and hour had I fixed upon. Then, however, I travelled at the utmost speed that I could, and arrived in Berne in good season.

My friends were impatiently awaiting my coming.

"Well, Christine," said I as I alighted from the conveyance at the spot, and met the faithful peasant woman, "what news have you? good or bad?"

"We have found out the woman, Madame, or at least where she lived. But she is very sick. They say she is dying."

"And the little girl?" I inquired.

"She is in the house with her."

"It is well. Take me to the house at once," rejoined I, a terrible determination coming over me.

"The cottage is not in the city, Madame, but in a sequestered spot about two miles and a half to the Northward of it. The road also is very

difficult. Do not think me too bold, Madame, but I would advise you to leave it till tomorrow morning as it is now so close on to night."

Upon thinking over this friendly advice, I resolved to follow it; not failing to remember that it was most likely my headlong haste that had so often before given Ann Rivel a warning of my approach.

That night was a long and anxious one to me, and sleep was a stranger to my eyes during its dreary passage. By day break the next morning, I was on the road with Pierre and Christine to the house where my enemy lay sick—where they said she was dying—where, for the first time since the night that Eloise was torn from my enclasping arms in New Orleans, I would set my eyes on the darling again.

We found the road fully as difficult, if not more so than Christine had described it, and we were several hours in coming to the cottage of Ann Rivel. It, was hidden down in a romantic little dell, and so buried in sweet flowering vines and graceful trees that I should certainly have passed by without seeing it, had not Pierre said:

"There Lady, there is the place right down there off the road."

I looked and saw the smoke curling peacefully out above the chimney, and such was the effect upon me, that I was obliged to sit down on a moss covered rock near by to regain my composure. This did not consume much time, however, and ordering my two peasant friends to remain where they were, and await my return, or else my signal, I descended to the cottage, and knocked at the door. The summons was not answered, and so I boldly walked in.

"*Now then for her!*" I whispered to myself, drawing my poignard—the one that had been stolen from me—that had been driven into the heart of poor Herbert Darnelle—and the one that I now intended to plant in the heart of her, who I felt fully assured had been his foul murderess. I had taken but a few steps, however, when I was confronted by a rough ill-visaged old woman, who demanded to know what I wanted; and why I had entered without waiting to be admitted.

"Silence, hag!" I exclaimed, pushing her back, "I wish to see your mistress, Ann Rivel. Where is she? She shall not escape me this time!"

A scream, as of some one in rage or agony, rung upon my ears at this moment. It came from a room on the right, between which and me stood the old woman. Seizing the latter, I hurled her from before me, and, at a few steps, stood in the presence of my enemy, Ann Rivel. It was her chamber, and, merciful Heaven! *there she lay on her couch dying!* I had hitherto disbelieved the report of her dying, as a story, set afloat by herself for some dark purpose of her own. But I could not doubt that haggard face, those cheeks, hollow, and white as marble; those eyes, brilliantly glassy, and the sweat of near dissolution standing on her forehead in beads.

"You have come at last! and disguised!" exclaimed Ann Rivel, glaring at me like a tigress, and endeavoring to rise to a sitting posture, but sinking back on one elbow.

"Yes," replied I, "I am here at last, nor do I intend to leave until you have made me reparation in some way for what you have done. I determined you should not become aware of my pursuit this time until I stood before you as I do now!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the expiring woman, "I knew it last night, and had I not been dying then, I would have slipped you again. But there is no need of that now, the tragedy is about to end, and in a way that your little dream it will. Before I die—provided you do not stab me, as I suppose you intended, with that poignard—which I recognise as the one I once plunged into the heart of Herbert Darnelle—I wish to say a few words to you."

The frightful *sangfroid* of the wretch almost stunned me, and lowering the point of my poignard, I simply replied:

"Go on."

"I will be brief," said Ann Rivel; "for my life is now numbered by minutes. When I lived in New Orleans, your father, in conjunction with Herbert Darnelle, ruined my father in business by refusing a certain favor the latter asked for. The result was, that from affluence, my mother and I were reduced almost to beggary. She broke her heart and died soon after. I lived, and resolved to revenge myself on Herbert Darnelle and you. You then loved each other fervently. The men of today are not Josephs, and I easily seduced Herbert—do you understand? I seduced him and became his bauble—his mistress—in order that I might make him my victim. How well I succeeded you know.

"But my task was not complete. He loved you dearly and your child, Eloise; and I resolved that both of you should also become my victims. Had it not been for that German servant girl of yours, Lena Graef, you would have perished at the hands of Law and Justice! ha! ha!

"I knew your vengeful disposition, and knew that when you escaped you would pursue me. So, like the Matador, I fled; always keeping close enough to you to find out exactly what you intended, and to keep you excited, and yet far enough from you to prevent you fulfilling your threats. How long I might have continued this I do not know. But I was suddenly stricken with the disease that has brought me to this bed of death. I immediately resolved to come to this cottage, and here await your arrival. I expected you before this, and even began to fear that you would not come in time.

"You have come hither for revenge and to recover your child; while I have brought you here for revenge and to——Oh! I die! pull that bell cord! pull! pull! or you will not hear all!"

The face of the dying woman was horribly contorted. She gasped and

struggled; and, almost unconsciously, I sprang close to her bed side and jerked the bell cord violently. A loud, whirring sound followed, as though by the act I had started some kind of machinery.

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Ann Rivel, in a weak, choking voice; "it is as I wished. Below this chamber is a vault, in which there are a hundred pounds of gunpowder. With your own hand you have started the clock-work, which, in about twenty seconds more, will explode the magazine. With your own hand! and Eloise, your daughter, is locked in the vault! Adieu! Revenge is——"

Ann Rivel fell back dead, without finishing her sentence; and, with the calmness of despair, I stood immoveable, awaiting the dreadful death she had so surely and diabolically prepared for me and my darling.

The whirring sound ceased, however, and was followed by no explosion, and my frigid despair instantly gave way to more active ideas. I rushed swiftly from the chamber, and found the old hag of a servant rocking herself over the kitchen fire.

"Woman!" I cried wildly, seizing her and holding a revolver at her head. "Show me down into the vault where the child is! Quick! or I will shoot you."

"Aye! that I will!" said she. "that woman must not know it though. But she can't move out of bed. Come, and you will bless me! Come!"

She hobbled on before me with surprising speed for one so old, and, opening a trap door, went down some heavy oaken steps. I followed her closely, and shuddered as I felt the cold, damp, musty air come up out of the opening. But this feeling was nothing compared to that which thrilled me as I heard a child's voice groaning. My heart almost stood still! that was the voice of my sweet darling Eloise. Long, long ago had it been since I last heard it.

"Eloise! Eloise! my child! my darling! Where are you? I am your mother! I am here to save you!" I cried.

At this moment the light that the old woman carried was blown out by a strong current of air, and all was utter darkness. At this moment, too, I felt a little body pressed against my own, and two little arms flung around me, and a little voice, weak and trembling, saying: "Mama! Oh! Mama!"

Oh, Heaven! could I, with this pen, trace on this paper my emotions at that instant, your very soul would thrill to read it, my dear friend. When, long before, Eloise had been torn from my embrace by the masked ruffians in New Orleans, she had wailed forth the self-same words that she now said: "Mama! Oh, Mama!" Then it had been in infantile despair; now it was in childish gladness.

I sank on my knees, and covered the dear, unseen face with kisses; and thanked Heaven, oh, how fervently; and almost crushed the darling in my happy embraces. By this time the old woman had relit her lamp, and bringing it close, enabled one to see the lineaments of little Eloise, the intended victim of that wicked woman, Ann Rivel.

"Come! come, my sweetest!" I exclaimed, catching Eloise up in my arms, let us be going.

"Stop!" said the old woman, I told you you would bless me. Come here and look."

I followed her to the spot in the vault where stood a barrel, open at the top, and a wire coming down through the floor overhead and passing down into the barrel. She stopped and thrusting her hand into the bar-

rel, brought forth a mass of gunpowder soaked with water.

"You see that," said she, "I was employed by that sick woman upstairs. She imparted her plan to me. She brought this powder here in parcels herself, saying that a woman would come some day to take the girl away, and she intended to blow the house, the girl, woman, and herself to atoms. This wire passes up to her hand. For a week past she has forced me to take the girl down here each day, and lock her up. I was to escape when you came, on Madame Rivel giving the signal of a cough and a scream. But, while obeying her order to lock the girl in the vault, I could not find it in my heart to aid in her murder, so I quietly poured water amongst the powder, and rendered it useless. But you will say nothing to Madame Rivel, will you?"

"She is dead! the fiend!" said I.

"Thank God, then!" rejoined the old woman. "She has gone to her reckoning; and it will be a heavy one, I'm thinking."

My dear Friend, I need not prolong my narrative. I do not feel able to do so. I provided Pierre Saché and all his family well for the future, as I also did the old woman, to whom I owed not only my own life, but that of my child, Eloise. The authorities of Berne took charge of the body and effects of the wicked creature, Ann Rivel, and with a gladdened heart, I left Berne to take passage for the Island of Sumatra. I leave here day after tomorrow, and there in that lovely clime, reunited to my darling Eloise, I shall spend the rest of my days in peace and happiness. I shall still wear my corals to remind me always of the past; but I shall no longer practice with the pistol, as I have burned the waxen figure of Ann Rivel. Eloise is delighted to go with me, and as I write this, she has her arms round my neck, and is saying: "Dear Mama tell the lady in America that no one will ever take me away again from you, and tell her, God bless her." I do so, my dear Friend, with delight. God bless you! Adieu! for we shall not meet again on earth.

The publisher desires to say, that while the foregoing narrative is not from the pen of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, the gifted authoress of so many well known works of fiction, its thrilling, heart-touching passages will be found equally affecting as any ever written by that lady.

Among all the sensations that were ever made in Paris the subject of the foregoing narrative created the most marked. Her wealth, her beauty, her peculiar complexion, and the uniform peculiarity of her dress, together with her eccentricity, astonished even Parisians.

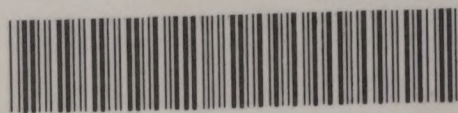
When she took up her residence there, and appeared in public, many persons of all classes were desirous of becoming acquainted with her, even if only for curiosity's sake. But she repelled all alike; in fact living like a hermit in the midst of all the fashionable frivolities around her. Of course she at once became the subject of the wildest and most improbable stories; but the foregoing pages contain her true history from first to last and it is undoubtedly one of the most romantic and thrilling that has ever been known.

THE END.



The only sign of life was a king black-bird, perched on the window sill, singing cheerily. And the Judge said that no hand but that of a deeply wronged wife could ever have taken such vengeance on a false husband. Besides the dagger handle was of red coral!

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